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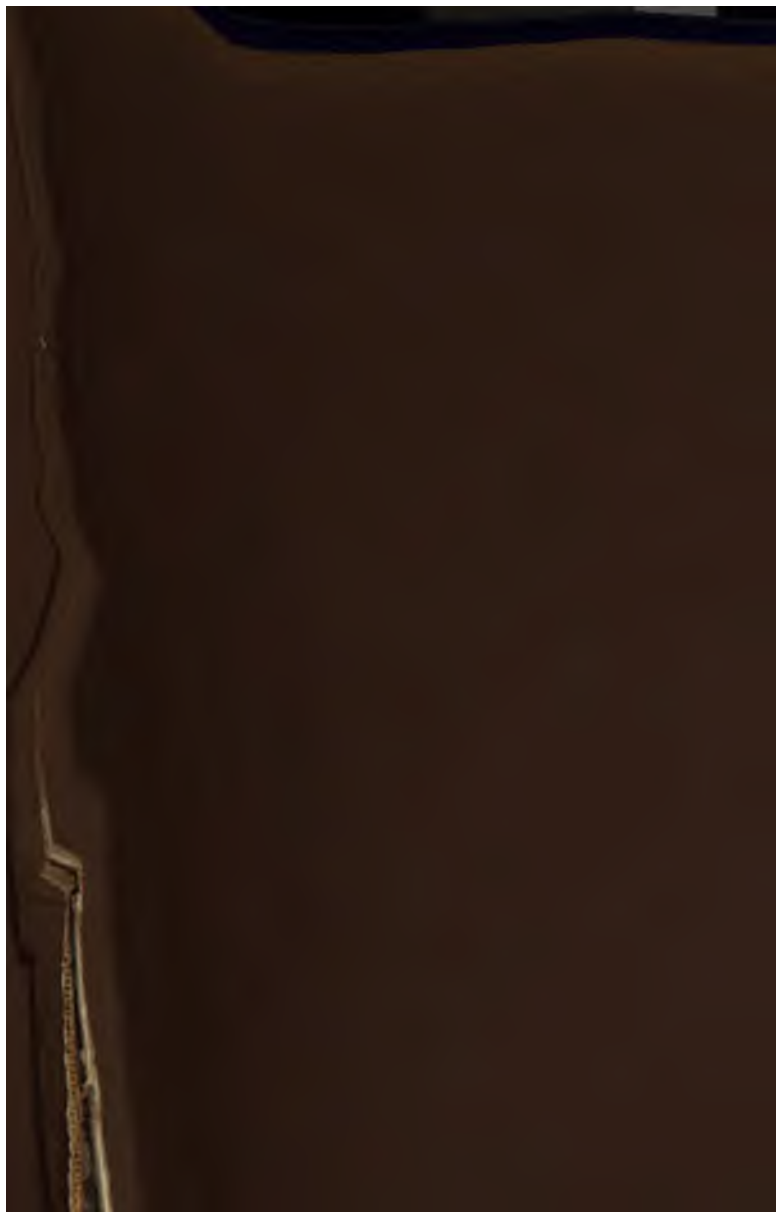
the Saints

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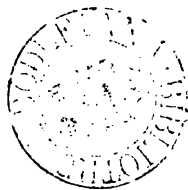
STORIES OF THE SAINTS

FOR CHILDREN.

By M. F. S.,

AUTHOR OF

"TOM'S CRUCIFIX, AND OTHER TALES," "CATHERINE
HAMILTON," ETC.

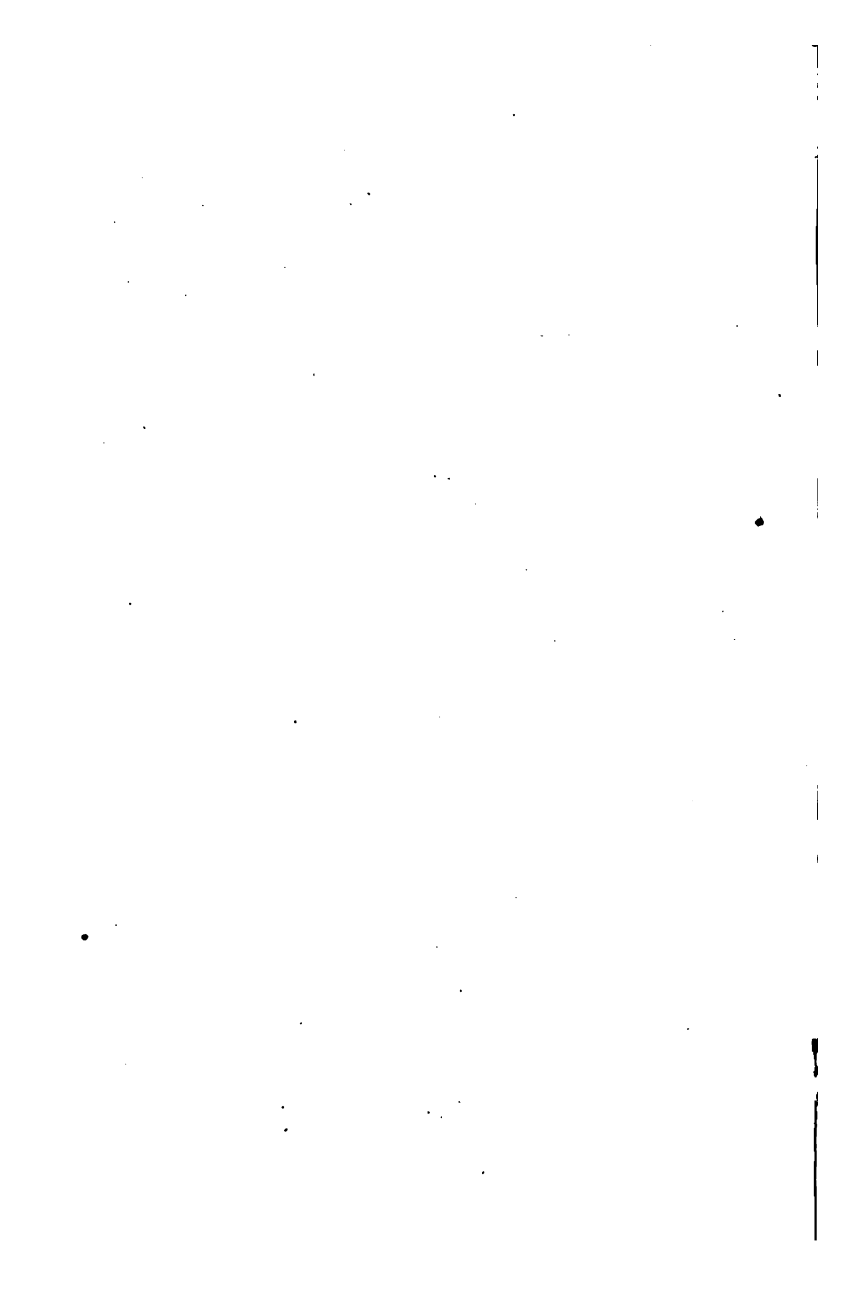


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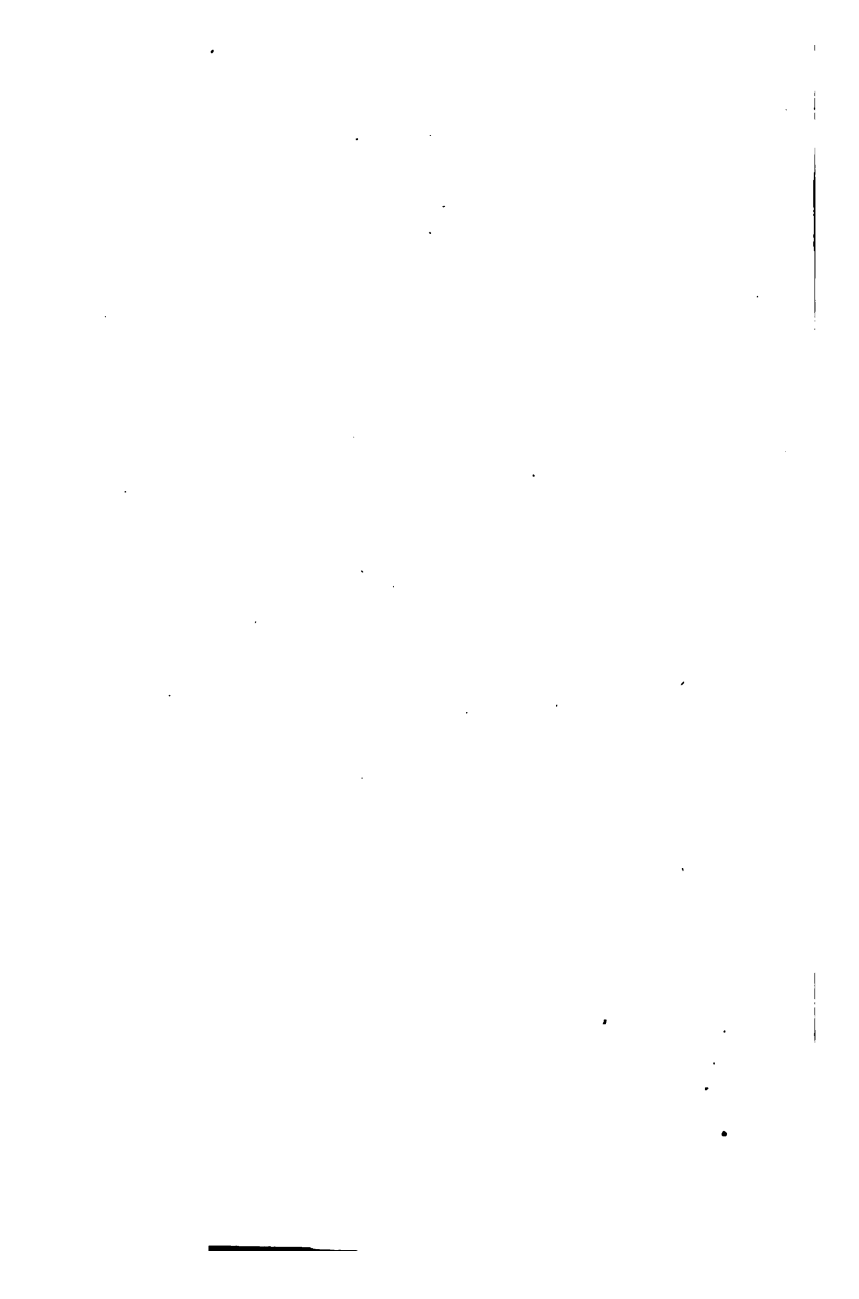


Dedicated

TO

MARY IMMACULATE,

QUEEN OF ALL SAINTS, AND HELP OF CHRISTIANS.



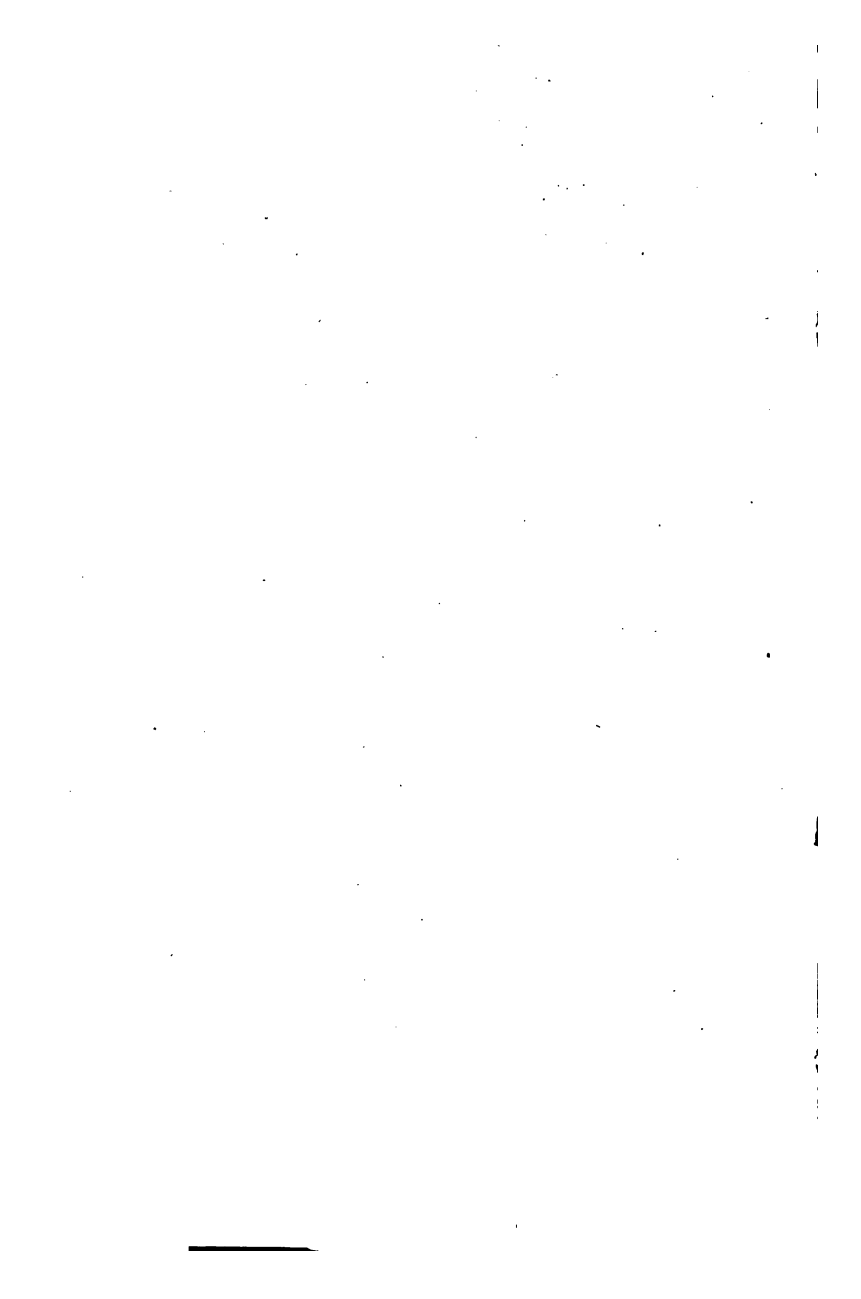


INTRODUCTION.

I HAVE some little friends who like no tales so well as those about the holy servants of God who have worked, and suffered, and died for His glory. For them—and for other children whose names I do not know and whose faces I may never see—these little “Stories of the Saints” are written, in the hope that they also may have courage to give themselves generously to the love and service of God.

M. F. S.

Feast of S. Aloysius,
1874.





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S. Frances of Rome.

WAR was raging throughout Europe, and the holy city of Rome was full of trouble; its churches burned and destroyed by heretics, and its streets the scene of terrible and bloody contests, when Frances, the child of Paul Bussa, was born there in the year 1334.

On the day of her birth she was carried to the church of S. Agnes, and baptized in the presence of many devout people who were praying for the blessing of God to descend upon their city; but they did not know that their entreaties were to be heard, and the benediction bestowed, by means of that little baby of a few hours old, who was to be so

powerful in God's hands to raise the piety of the people, and bring back peace among them.

We hear that the little Frances was from her infancy unlike other children; such a heavenly light shone in her eyes, and such an unusual sweetness rested upon her features, that her mother always felt as if she had one of God's angels in her arms when she hushed her baby daughter to rest.

At two years old she loved to go by herself into quiet corners, and, putting her little hands together, pray to God, or say hymns to the Blessed Virgin, and she delighted in silence, even at that early age. When she was six years old she received the sacrament of Confirmation in the church of S. Agnes, where she had been baptized, and from that time she was filled with the desire to show her love for Jesus by denying herself, and suffering for His sake in every way she was able.

In imitation of some of the saints of whom her mother had taught her, Frances began to give up eating eggs, meat, and sweets of every

kind, living on boiled vegetables and bread, and drinking only pure water from that time. She obeyed her confessor in everything, and often begged his permission to practise penances which would not be suited to one so young unless God showed very plainly that He had chosen that way for her to become holy. Sometimes the priest yielded to her desire, but more often he refused his leave, and she submitted quite cheerfully without a word of regret, or a shade of disappointment on her face.

Thus the life of the little Frances was as perfect as a child's life could be; no untrue words were heard upon her lips, no passion disturbed her pure heart, every little action was done to please God, and the least fault caused her to shed most bitter tears of sorrow. Wonderful as all this may seem, we must remember that God chooses His saints to come to Him in different ways; some by their great contrition for early sin, some by terrible penances, some by easier ways of love, some by

innocent holiness, even from their birth, like S. Frances of Rome, in preparation for the favours He intended to give her in after-years ; but each one has been faithful to the special grace given them—each one has walked steadily along the path our Lord pointed out to them, and thus reached the state of perfection which was to lead them to the high places they hold in heaven.

All who love Jesus Christ love the poor who were so very dear to Him ; and thus, as Frances grew in devotion, her works of mercy increased, and to many a sad, troubled heart her face, and smile, and sweet voice brought comfort and hope.

From a very young child, our Saint had wished some day to enter a convent, and give all her life to God as a religious ; but she never talked freely and lightly of this great desire, believing it too sacred to be known to any but God and her confessor.

Each day she seemed to grow more suited for this life, loving nothing but to be near her

Lord, and living on the help and grace He gave her—yet she was first to be tried by becoming the wife of a rich young nobleman, and learn to sacrifice her longing wish to God's most holy Will for many, many years before it should be granted.

Her parents began to notice what an unusual life she led, and finding in reply to their questions how great was her wish to be a nun, they smilingly told her it was a girlish fancy, and that she had already been promised as the wife of Lorenzo Ponziano, of noble family, and possessed of a large fortune.

Frances sank on her knees, and begged her father to alter his plans, and allow her to do what she believed was God's Will, but in vain; he declared that he had made the promise, and nothing should persuade him to break it, but she, as a dutiful child, must yield her desire to his. Rising from her knees, the Saint went to her own room, and there, prostrate before her crucifix, she implored God's protection, and begged Him to prevent

her being married, if it was His Will for her to become a religious. She then went to her confessor, and told him what had happened, and he promised to pray for her, and ask light from God about her future life; but as he foresaw what was the divine Will he tried to prepare her for the trial which was coming.

“If your parents continue to insist on your being married,” he said, “believe that God asks you to offer Him this sacrifice. Have only one thought—the sweet Will of God. Lay down your own wishes at His feet, and if He refuses you the life you desire, accept the one He offers you, and be His faithful servant.”

Frances went home to wait for her father's commands; she prayed night and day, she wept and fasted, and when both father and mother repeated their wishes, she gently promised obedience, and gave no sign of the pain and disappointment she suffered.

The marriage soon took place amidst the rejoicings of the family of Ponziano; and

Frances went to her new home, where she led the same holy life to which she had been accustomed, but she managed to act with such discretion that her piety offended no one, whilst her sweet temper and kind manners charmed them all.

Still, though she was forced to take some share in public amusements, because of her husband's rank, she always abstained from dancing and card-playing, and every moment which she could use as she pleased was spent in prayer, either in one of the churches of Rome, or her own room.

Of course there were many persons who laughed at her, and called her piety absurd in one so young; others would have persuaded her husband to interfere, but he looked upon her with too much love and respect to prevent her following where God led her, whilst his father and mother said she was an angel of peace to their house; and, indeed, her gentle influence seemed drawing them all nearer to heaven.

But soon a severe illness came upon her, to the great distress of her friends. Frances alone was quite calm, willing to live or die according to God's pleasure. The worst night of her sufferings came, she was exhausted and motionless with pain, when suddenly a light broke in upon the darkened room, in the midst of which stood a majestic figure wearing the robe of a pilgrim, but shining like brightest gold.

"I am Alexis," he said; "I am sent from heaven to ask if thou choosest to be healed."

The Saint murmured, faintly:—

"I have no choice but the Will of God. I accept life or death as He pleases."

"Life then it shall be," said Alexis; "for God's Will is that you should remain on earth to glorify Him," and spreading his mantle over Frances, the vision disappeared, leaving her free from pain and perfectly well.

Astonished at God's great mercy, she rose softly, and kneeling on the floor, gave thanks

to Him, and then she hurried to the bedside of her sister-in-law, who was also very holy, and her best beloved companion.

“Vannozza, dear Vannozza!” Frances exclaimed, waking the sleeper so suddenly that she cried out:—

“Who are you? It sounds like the voice of my sister.”

“It is me—your sister,” replied Frances, and then relating what had happened, she bade Vannozza praise God for His favour to her, and as soon as morning broke, they hurried together to the church of S. Alexis, to venerate his relics and give him thanks.

Her restored health was the source of great joy to her husband and family, who received her as given back to them by God from the arms of death.

After this illness and miraculous recovery, Frances gave her life more and more to prayer and penance, feeling that God asked it from her in return for His mercy. All the time which she had at her disposal was given to

religious practices, or to visiting the hospitals and bestowing alms upon the poor.

But God allowed the Saint to have many great temptations and sufferings, even to see visibly the evil spirit, although he was not permitted to do her harm. This was to teach her great humility, so that she might depend only on divine help and grace.

When her first little son was born, S. Frances took the greatest care of him, repeating to him the Our Father and Hail Mary even before he could speak; so that he might learn early to love the Names of Jesus and Mary; and he grew up afterwards to be a great honour and happiness to his family.

A terrible famine broke out in Rome, and the Ponziani being rich, did great acts of kindness to the sufferers, giving them presents of corn, wine, and clothing, while Frances and her sister Vannozza visited the hospitals and the most miserable parts of the city. But at last even their stores failed, and these two noble women went about begging for the poor

they loved so much, asking with tears for help for the starving, dying people who were lying in crowds at the corners of the streets.

One day S. Frances took her sister and a pious servant to the corn-loft, to see if a few grains might not still be left, and after a long, patient search, they collected about a measure, which they were joyfully carrying off, when Lorenzo entered the granary, and, looking round, beheld with surprise, about forty measures of shining, yellow corn, which had been supplied miraculously by angels.

But not only thus did God help His servant—not corn alone, but wine was needed by her sick poor, and she had drained the casks to the last drop for them. Her brothers, and even her husband, reproached her for giving all they had, which she bore in gentle silence, and then, lifting up her heart in faith and prayer to heaven, she replied:—

“Do not be angry. Come to the cellar. It may be that through God’s mercy there is now wine in the cask,” and following her unwill-

ingly, they found a supply of richer wine than had ever been known before.

It would take too long to tell all the wonderful things which happened in the life of Frances—great troubles amongst her relations, the loss of her children, the strange visions which God sent to cheer and console her, and the miracles He worked through and for her—we must pass on to the strange, unusual grace which was bestowed upon her in having the power to see her angel guardian always at her side. We know by faith that it is so, that each one of us has a heavenly companion ever near us in danger or temptation, but S. Frances of Rome could *see* this angel form distinctly, although it was not made visible to other people, and at night she could easily write by the light of the dazzling brilliancy shed around her. It was a wonderful grace, and Frances renewed her efforts to lead a life of perfect holiness with this guide always by her; but it deepened her humility as she felt how unworthy she was of this divine favour. When

she committed the slightest fault, the angel seemed to disappear, and it was only after examining her conscience and confessing her failing, that he returned.

Frances divided her own money into two parts—one half was given to buying food for the poor, the other for clothing and medicine for the sick—her own dress was only of a coarse, dark-green material, patched with any bits of cloth which came in her way.

But though she devoted her life to prayer, and penance, and good works, Frances never allowed anything to prevent her fulfilling her duty to her husband; she obeyed his slightest wish, and never murmured at any interruption which he might cause her. One day he sent for her when she was reciting the Office of the Blessed Virgin; she went to him instantly, did what he required, and returned to her prayers; but another summons came, another, and another! four times she was disturbed, and always for trifling reasons, but she obeyed with perfect good humour, and returned to her

Office without having had her peace of mind broken. On taking up her book the last time, she was surprised to see the words she had four times begun and left unfinished written in golden letters, and the angel whispered in her ear: "Thus God rewards the virtue of perfect obedience." The golden letters remained in her book as long as she lived.

Lorenzo Ponziano became more attached to his saintly wife as years passed on, and remembering her early longing for a religious life, he told her one day that he would leave her free to choose her own employments and pursuits, and do in all respects as she wished, if only she would remain to attend on him until his death.

Lorenzo was then in feeble health, and Frances gave him the most tender care; but she received his permission with great joy, for it gave her the power of commencing a house for a new congregation of holy nuns, although she could not herself live with them whilst her husband needed her.

There were many devout women in Rome who had been imitating the life of Frances, and they desired to be together, keeping certain rules, looking to the Saint to give them advice and act towards them as a mother.

S. Frances prayed much to know God's Will, and that she might more certainly obtain His guidance, she undertook a pilgrimage, in the company of Vannozza and another woman of piety, to "S. Mary of the Angels," in honour of the Blessed Virgin and the Saint of Assisi. They went on foot, without money or provisions, out of the city, and along their way under the burning August sun, parched with thirst and weary from the heat, and as their pilgrimage was nearly ended, a stranger met them, dressed in the habit of S. Francis, who spoke with them of the sufferings of Jesus and the love of Mary. It was the Saint of Assisi, who blessed the little company, and touching a wild pear-tree by the wayside, brought down from it fruit to quench their thirst and send them refreshed upon their way. That day

they reached the church to which their pilgrimage was made, and next morning received Communion. There and then Frances had a vision, encouraging her to carry out the plan she had thought of.

A great trouble came to our Saint on her return to Rome. Her confessor, who had been her early friend and guide, had died during her absence, and it seemed as if she needed him more just then to advise her how to arrange for beginning the religious house she intended.

But God watched over her, and directed her to seek help from another holy priest, and after a great many difficulties, her scheme was carried out. Ten devout women of noble family gave themselves entirely to God, under the name of "Oblates," to live for His glory in religion.

Frances had now been married forty years. It was a long time since her early wish had been given up, but it was as strong in her heart as ever. Yet even now the time had not

come for God to allow her to leave the world, and she continued to nurse her husband, and attend to her household, although she visited and watched over her Oblates in the old gloomy convent of Tor di Specchi.

At last she was free. Lorenzo died in the grace of God, breathing blessings upon his holy wife; and then, bidding her only remaining son farewell, Frances went to spend the last years of her life alone with her Lord.

Wonderfully her days passed now; more and more supernatural favours were poured out upon her; but the end was very near, and when a violent fever came on, her body, already worn out with labour and fasting, had not strength to recover it. The news of her illness spread through Rome, causing the greatest distress among rich and poor, and crowds surrounded the convent, trying to get to her dying bed. As many as she could receive were taken into her presence, and she had a loving word for each. Glorious visions passed before her. The evil one, who had been

permitted to try her so often, was powerless now, and God's peace was all around her. For the last time she received the Holy Communion, whilst angels seemed to surround her, making soft, sweet music in her ear. The nuns, her Oblates, wept bitterly as they knelt round her bed, and begged her to implore God to spare her to them longer. "His Will is my will," she murmured. "I am ready to remain if it is His pleasure."

But after that she grew worse. There were last words with her son, Baptista, last instructions to the sorrowing nuns, and then a sublime beauty beamed upon her face, her eyes closed, and her spirit returned to God.

Even as she lay in death, it pleased the Almighty to display His power in healing sickness by the touch of her holy body, and every one declared that "Frances was a saint; Frances was in heaven."

That was the feeling of loving, grateful hearts, but the Church echoed it, and the 9th of March was the day appointed for her fes-

tival, and nobles and beggars alike rejoiced, and the grand old city was illuminated upon the night when it was proclaimed that their own loving, humble Frances, who had knelt before their altars, and begged in their streets, who had shared in their sufferings, and brought down heavenly blessings by her prayers, should be for ever the Saint of Rome.





S. Francis of Assisi.

IN the city of Assisi, in the year 1182, a little child was born in a stable on a bed of straw—not because his parents were poor, and had no other home, but because his mother had been told beforehand, by a holy pilgrim, that God wished the coming of Francis into the world thus, to resemble the birth of Jesus Christ in the cave of Bethlehem.

He received in baptism the name of John, in honour of the apostle who was so dear to our Lord; but when his father returned home after a long absence in France, and heard the news of a little son having been given him, he desired that he should be called Francis.

As he grew older, he was taught by pious men, and soon learned to read Latin and French with ease; and later he assisted his father in his business as a merchant. The character of Francis was generous and kind; all that he gained in trade he spent freely, not with a wasteful spirit, but because he loved to pour out his money to make others happy. He gave splendid banquets to his friends, and thus became the favourite of all the youths of his town, who named him "The Flower of Assisi." But during his popularity and pleasure, in spite of his love of gorgeous dress and all that was bright and beautiful, we hear that he was never known to utter or allow a coarse word or improper jest.

But God, who intended him for so holy a life, did not long leave Francis to continue this career of worldliness, and in His mercy a severe illness laid him aside, from which he rose up with a changed spirit, seeing at last that pleasure was not the true end for which he had been created. Although he felt a dis-

gust for the amusements he had formerly loved, many visions of fame and glory passed through his mind, which led him to take up arms as a soldier. But God once more sent sickness upon him, during which, in a vision of the night, the Holy Spirit spoke to his heart, reproaching him with deserting his Creator. Then Francis exclaimed, "O my God, what wouldst Thou have me to do?" "Return into the city," said the voice. "There it shall be told thee what thou hast to do."

Next morning the young man returned to Assisi, and his friends again chose him to lead their amusements; but Francis had lost his gaiety of spirit, and his absent manner showed that his heart was set upon other things.

Gradually he grew to be a great lover of prayer, and in this way the work of God grew manifest to others. His soul seemed penetrated with love to Christ, and compassionate charity towards the poor, and he would spend all he had, even dividing his clothing for the sick and suffering.

But a great longing filled his heart to do far more than this. He desired to be an exile from his own home, and begin a life of hardship and poverty, and one day at Rome, he was so carried away by this wish that, after praying at the tomb of the apostles, he came out amidst the crowd of beggars at the door of the church, and giving his rich cloak to one, from whom in exchange he took a ragged, dirty garment, he remained all day upon the steps of S. Peter's, asking alms.

Returning to Assisi, the devil tempted him with forming pictures in his mind of his early joyous life, his luxurious home, his splendid dress, his dreams of glory and greatness, but he took refuge in prayer, and God gave him strength to resist. He went to the old church of S. Damian, and there, before a crucifix, begged for light to know the divine Will, and grace to do always what was pleasing to God. Three times over he heard the words, "Go, Francis, and repair My house, which is falling into ruin;" and, not perfectly understanding their

meaning, he went to the priest with money, begging him to buy oil to supply a lamp for burning before the crucifix; then, starting to Foligno, he sold his horse and some pieces of stuff, bringing the gold he received for them to the priest of S. Damian's, to repair the church. In the meantime his father heard what he was doing, and came, with several friends, to S. Damian's, in great anger, but Francis hid himself in a cave for nearly a month, begging God to give him courage to practise the holy virtue he had set before him. After that time he felt renewed strength and grace, so that he feared no longer to return to Assisi; but he, who had only a few weeks before been called the flower of that city, was now pelted with stones and mud, whilst the people hissed and mocked him, declaring that he was mad; yet Francis received these insults with joy, thanking God for allowing him to bear the cross.

Not so his father, Bernadone. When *he* was told that his son was making himself the

contempt and laughing-stock of Assisi, he rushed out, furious with anger, and striking Francis violently, dragged him into his house, imprisoning him in a dark cellar. His mother grieved exceedingly at this harsh treatment, and during her husband's absence on business, she released Francis, begging him, by his love for her, not to leave his family and the world; however, when she found her pleading was useless, she let him go peacefully, and Francis returned to S. Damian's once more.

Peter Bernadone reproached his wife bitterly when he came back, and set off at once in pursuit of his son; but Francis said firmly,

"I do not fear what you can do to me; it is a happiness for me to suffer like Jesus Christ."

Then the father asked for the price of the horse and the cloth, and after receiving it, he suspected he must have other money in his possession, and went with complaints to the magistrate, who summoned Francis to appear before him, but knowing that the bishop only had authority over one who had given himself

to the service of God, he refused to interfere. Bernadone then complained to the bishop, who sent for Francis, and made him restore to his father all the money he had.

"Trust in God," he said, kindly ; "He will give you all that is wanting for the good of His church."

The Saint rose, and took off all his rich clothes, keeping his hair-shirt alone ; then, laying them at the bishop's feet, he exclaimed,

"Till now I have called Peter Bernadone my father, but now I may with boldness say, Our Father Who art in heaven, for in Him I place all my faith and hope."

The bishop became from that moment his best friend and protector, covering him with his own cloak until some clothing could be found ; and at last a poor labourer's garment was brought, which Francis joyfully put on, first marking upon it with some mortar a large cross. He was not quite twenty-five years old at this time, but he had found the happiness of belonging to the poor of Christ Jesus, ex-

pecting nothing and receiving nothing but from Him.

Free now from all that had bound him to the world, Francis hastened into solitude, singing the love and praise of God as he traversed woods and mountains. Once he was met by robbers. "Who are you?" they asked; upon which the Saint told them he was a herald of the great King. Then they beat him, and cast him into a deep ditch filled with snow, bidding him rest there, but Francis rose up full of joy at having an opportunity of suffering for Christ, and began again to sing louder than before. Reaching a monastery he received alms like a beggar, and then journeyed on to Gubbio, where he began to serve lepers. At first this was a very hard and repulsive duty to take up for the love of God, for he had always had a horror of leprosy, but he set himself steadfastly to overcome this feeling of disgust, and before his death he declared that the service of lepers had been all sweetness to him.

His great charity was wonderfully blessed by God. Once upon meeting a man whose face was in a terrible state of disease, Francis kissed him on the cheek, which was healed immediately. After a time God's voice again called the Saint to the work of restoring the church of S. Damian, and he returned to Assisi, where many of his former friends reviled him, whilst others shed tears to behold the change which had passed over him; but Francis was indifferent to all, and toiled on from morning till night like a common labourer; and he also repaired the little chapel of the Portiuncula. During this labour the priest of S. Damian's provided him with necessary food, and Francis accepted his charity for some days, but this was not sufficient to satisfy that craving after perfect poverty; this was not—for him—the life of a follower of Christ, Who was born homeless, and buried in the tomb of a stranger; so the next day he went from door to door begging his bread, which he sat down to eat at the corner of the street.

Peter Bernadone was more than ever angry now, and cursed his son if he chanced to meet him. Francis, feeling this very bitterly, searched for a poor old man, a beggar also, whom he took for his father, and whenever he was cursed by his father Bernadone, he would turn to the old beggar asking for his blessing. In the year 1208 Francis cast away his shoes, and putting on a coarse ash-coloured tunic, and girding himself with a cord, went amongst his fellow-citizens preaching penance, in which he was presently joined by another citizen of Assisi, named Bernard, who was also very holy, and filled with a spirit of poverty.

On the same day Peter of Catania begged to be allowed to join himself with them, and all three went together to the church to ask God's blessing, and as the beautiful simple custom of those days was, they opened the Book of the Holy Gospels three times, thereby to obtain a knowledge of what the Almighty desired of them.

At the first opening Francis read, "If thou

wilt be perfect, go and sell all that thou hast and give to the poor." The second time it was, "Take nothing for your journey." And the last words were, "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me." "Behold the counsels God would have us follow," said Francis; so then they sold all they had, giving the price amongst the poor, and went to dwell in a poor deserted little hut in the plain of Rivo-Torto. Seven days after, another citizen of Assisi sought to discover his friends, but he knew not where to find them, so he prayed earnestly to God that he might be guided to them, and following an unknown road, he came upon Francis praying in a wood, so he knelt down, and begged to be received into the little company. This brother, named Egidius, led always a most saintly life, having a great spirit of prayer.

But these devout men could not always remain in the solitude they had chosen; from time to time they went about teaching the

truth of God, many others coming to join them; and God made known to Francis that He would spread their company abroad through all the world, for the salvation of many souls. At length the Saint called his sons to assemble together to tell what they had done amongst men for Christ, and to form rules by which they were to be guided, and they journeyed to Rome to ask the protection and guidance of the Pope Innocent III. He received them in the presence of his cardinals, some of whom objected to the very great poverty which Francis proposed for his order; but being enlightened by God in prayer, the Holy Father Innocent gave his approval to the rule of the company, which continued to increase rapidly.

Francis and his disciples made many journeys into different parts, gathering followers together, working miracles and founding convents, preaching peace by Christ and penance for sin. Throughout Italy and Spain he travelled, and on to the East, where he was captured by the Saracens and taken before

the Sultan. To him Francis preached so earnestly the doctrine of one God in three persons, that he was entreated to remain, whereupon he said he would stay, if the Sultan and his people would be converted to the true Church of God. He was set free, and sent safely to Damietta on his way home; but to this day a remembrance of his work in the East remains, for his friars minor are there still guarding the sepulchre of Christ.

Many long and serious illnesses occurred to Francis during his labours, and many trials and temptations were allowed by God, to perfect his holiness and love for Christ. Once when praying in his cell the devil whispered to him that he was too old to bear such long watchings, and that he needed more sleep, upon which the Saint rose up, and going into the fields, flung himself into the midst of some thorn bushes all covered with snow, so that he might make his body suffer, rather than listen to the tempter. Then a bright light surrounded him, and roses appeared upon the

thorn bushes, and angel voices said, "Francis, hasten to the church, for Jesus and His Mother are there." He obeyed, gathering first twelve white and twelve red roses, and, prostrate before our Lord, he begged of Him to grant a day when an indulgence should be attached to that holy place. Jesus replied that it should be from the evening of the day upon which S. Peter was delivered from his chains until the evening of the following day, and the choirs of angels chanted the *Te Deum* in thanksgiving.

Francis then gathered three of each colour of the miraculous roses to send to the Pope, in testimony of what had happened, and the Holy Father caused the great Indulgence to be solemnly published. This was the beginning of the indulgence of the *Portiuncula*, and there the faithful for many generations have lost their burden of sin, and received the pardon of Christ according to His promise to S. Francis, whilst we at a distance from those sacred places, can by faith in that promise, and by love to the holy humble saints of God,

share in the same privilege, and receive the same gift of healing, as those who can journey to the far-off plains of Assisi, and kneel before the altars of the church of S. Mary of the Angels.

Now we must follow our Saint to the mountain where he received the marks of the cross of Christ, toiling with him up the steep ascent of Alvernia. There a little cell was made at the foot of a beautiful beech-tree, where S. Francis, believing the time of his death to be approaching, desired to retire alone with God, and prepare for his departure. The birds showed their joy at the coming of the gentle Saint by singing joyously above his head, perching upon his shoulders and his arms, to the great surprise of his companions; and having desired that Brother Leo should bring him a little bread and water, and no one else be suffered to approach, Francis shut himself up in his cell, and began to be wholly absorbed in contemplating God.

As the Feast of the Assumption drew near

the holy man sought for a still more lonely hiding-place, and when they had searched long they found one, but a frightful chasm in the rock prevented them getting to it. Then they put across the chasm a tree, to serve as a bridge, and here S. Francis dwelt in solitude, whilst once in the day and once in the night Brother Leo visited him. Wonderful visions were sent to him from God during this time, and he became more and more full of divine sweetness and love. One day S. Francis was praying earnestly for two graces before he died ; first, that he might feel in his soul and body as much as was possible what the sufferings of Jesus had been in His Passion ; the second, that he might have in his heart as much as was possible of that burning love which caused Christ to long to suffer for enemies. For a great while he continued praying thus until he believed God had heard his request, and then he began to fix all his mind upon the infinite charity of Christ in His most bitter Passion, so that his heart

glowed and melted within him for love of the crucified One. Then a seraph came down from heaven with six fiery wings, and S. Francis observing his approach, saw that he bore the image of Jesus crucified; two wings were spread over the head, two covered the body, and two were outspread in flying. Francis was filled with joy and grief and wonder—joy at the presence of his Lord, grief at beholding Him crucified, and wonder at the strangeness of the vision.

When all Alvernia seemed wrapt in fire, which glowed over the mountains and valleys round, Christ in this seraph's form spoke secretly to Francis, leaving in his heart an excessive love, and upon his flesh the marks of the sacred Passion. Upon his hands and feet there were the traces of nails, as if, like the Hands and Feet of Jesus, they, too, had been pierced; and upon his right side there was the mark of an open wound, from which drops of blood often fell, staining his habit. These most sacred marks of the love of Christ gave

great happiness to S. Francis, and yet they caused him such pain that he was forced to reveal his secret to Brother Leo, who touched and dressed the wounds on all days excepting from Thursday evening till Saturday morning, when he would not allow the suffering to be lessened, that so he might unite more closely in the agonies Christ bore during those hours ; afterwards Francis allowed the two other brothers, who had journeyed with him to Alvernia, to see and kiss his hands ; then leaving them there with his blessing, he returned, to pass amongst the towns and villages preaching always the love of Christ crucified.

But the Saint had not long to live ; his sickness increased, and he begged to be carried to S. Mary of the Angels, to die where he had first begun the life of grace. The last day he called his children together, and, blessing them, desired to be laid upon the ground whilst the Passion of Christ was read to him, and on the evening of the 4th October he passed peacefully away, one of his brethren seeing his soul

ascend to heaven under the appearance of a brilliant star.

Thus God rewarded the burning love and deep humility of His holy servant Francis ; thus He fulfilled the promise given by Christ, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."





S. Clare.

FAVORINO SCIFFI and his wife, Ortolana, lived in a castle near the town of Assisi. They were nobly born and wealthy. He was a brave warrior, and she a pious woman, given to works of mercy and charity. Yet, with all these blessings, there was one they desired which God had withheld, for no children's faces gladdened their home.

At length Ortolana went on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, and at Bethlehem prayed earnestly, that if it was God's holy Will, she might no longer be childless, and, as an answer to her request, a daughter was born to her, whom she was directed by Heaven to name Clare.

The little infant seemed to bring joy and blessing with her; and as she grew up, it was plain that God's favours had been early bestowed upon her, for even as a tiny child, she showed a remarkable spirit of penance, refusing herself everything she did not strictly need, for the sake of others, and trying to live retired from human notice, for Christ alone. On reaching the age of reason her love of God became more ardent, and the more she thought of Him so much more did she grow to hate herself.

To accord with her rank, the wealth of her parents, and what they desired for her, Clare was obliged to wear rich and costly clothing, but underneath it were rough hair shirts and other instruments of penance, which she put on for the love of our Lord Jesus Christ, so that she might never forget His cruel sufferings for her.

When Clare was fifteen years of age, her parents determined to have her married; but although many husbands, both rich and noble,

were proposed to her, she would not listen to their entreaties, but begged to be allowed to remain at home while she was still so young. The cause of this was, that Clare had fixed her mind upon belonging wholly to God, although as yet she did not know in what way to sacrifice herself to Him ; and when, through a relative, she heard of the holy S. Francis, who had left parents, and friends, and home for the love of Christ, she longed to follow in his footsteps.

At length she went to speak to him, and poured out all her desires into his ear. But Francis asked a hard thing, as a test of her sincerity. "Lay aside your rich garments, put on sackcloth, and go through the town begging alms if you wish me to believe you," he said.

Clare never hesitated, never wavered. She returned at once to her home, wrapped herself in a coarse piece of sackcloth which covered her, and went through the streets of her native city asking bread for the love of God.

After seeing her once or twice more, and

feeling convinced that it was really a divine voice which called her to a life of penance, Francis told her to dress in her richest clothing upon the coming Palm Sunday, go to church for the blessing of the palms, and then come to him at S. Mary of the Angels, where he would give her the habit of a religious.

Clare obeyed all these directions, dressed herself with so much care that her mother and her younger sister were surprised, and then accompanied her friends to the cathedral, after which she returned home to prepare to leave it for ever. She was in her eighteenth year when she left her father's house in secret, and gliding softly down the castle stairs, escaped by a small side door which was usually open, but then to her dismay was closed by large stones rolled against it. These, however, she moved sufficiently to pass through, praying to God, without Whose help she could not have made her way, and then, with the friend who had first told her of S.

Francis, she hurried to the church where he was waiting for her.

Putting off her rich dress, she was clothed in a coarse ash-coloured tunic, girded with a thick cord, her long hair cut off, and a veil put upon her head, and she made her vows to God, whilst her garments and her jewels were distributed amongst the poor. S. Francis placed her in a Benedictine monastery in Assisi, to which her father pursued her, intending to force her back into the world; but no entreaties shook her resolve to follow Jesus in poverty and suffering. Then Favorino threatened to drag her away by violence, but Clare ran to the altar, and, clinging to it, lifted her veil, showing her head without its covering of hair, as a proof that she belonged for ever to God, and then her friends left her and troubled her no more.

Soon afterwards, when Clare had been removed to another convent, her next sister, Agnes, came to see her, declaring that she would also give herself entirely to God. Then Favorino's anger burst out afresh, and, calling

his family together, he told them that his second daughter had left her home, and besought them to help him bring her back.

Twelve strong men went with the father to the convent, where they asked to see Agnes, and urged her to return, but when she refused they rushed upon her, seized her by her hair and dragged her out. "Help, help," cried the frightened girl, as they forced her roughly down the mountain path, but there they stayed, for the slight form had become as heavy as lead at the prayer of her sister Clare, and all their strength united failed to lift her. One of them, fiercer than the rest, raised his sword to kill her, but his arm fell withered to his side, and was only cured later by the intercession of Agnes. Then Clare came forward, and besought them to spare her the torn and bruised form of her sister, and they departed, leaving Agnes to rise, all bleeding and wounded, from the ground, to return to the convent, where Francis gave her to God, clothing her also in the habit of penance.

These two sisters were to be the first of that company of poor and holy women who form the Second Order of S. Francis, and he placed these at S. Damian's, where others joined them, forming a little community of which Clare was abbess.

Afterwards Agnes was sent to Florence to commence a house of the same kind there, and thus the sisters were separated, never meeting again till thirty years later, when the elder was dying. It was a severe life of penance, prayer, and almost unbroken silence, but in it both the sisters found great happiness, because God had placed them there. Clare had so wonderful a spirit of prayer that she would often remain hours wrapt in the thought of the sacred Passion of Jesus; and when the time for rest came, she remained with God, and then went to awaken the sisters, light the lamps, ring the bell, and return to her place for the Divine Office. The devil tried to hinder the union of her soul with God by appearing to her in a hideous form, but Clare said:—

"They who serve the Lord need never be afraid," and he immediately disappeared.

In honour of the Blessed Sacrament, the Saint spent much time in working for the altar, even when upon her sick-bed; spinning with her own hands linen for the use of the churches which needed it.

Though Clare had been compelled to take the place of abbess, she loved better to serve her sisters than to command them, and in sickness she waited upon them most patiently and charitably. Weak as her body was, she treated herself with great severity, eating only herbs or vegetables, sleeping on the ground with a log of wood for her pillow, and never even in the coldest weather wearing any covering upon her feet; yet these mortifications never made her gloomy or unhappy, and her smile was bright and her voice always cheerful.

During the time of S. Clare, the Church was persecuted by the Saracens, and the infidel troops entered Assisi and saw the convent upon the hill before them. They at once

determined to attack it, and choosing a dark night, scaled the high walls and made their way into the outer court. At their first shout, the hearts of the defenceless nuns were filled with fear, and they came crowding round the bedside of the holy abbess, who was sick.

"Fear not, my children, Jesus will defend you," she said; and bade them carry her to the convent gate.

They reminded her of the danger, of her weak health, but it was in vain. S. Clare made her way to the battlements, assisted by two of her nuns, but first she knelt before the Blessed Sacrament and begged Jesus to protect those who were given to Him, and not allow their fierce and wicked enemies to harm them. As she prayed, a sweet voice like that of a child seemed to come from the tabernacle. "I will protect you for ever," it said. Then the Saint's confidence grew stronger, and she cried :—

"Lord, defend also this city which maintains us for the love of Thee."

To which the silvery voice answered :—

“This city shall suffer, but it shall be defended by My protection and your prayers.”

Then Clare, full of power from God, took the remonstrance in her hand, and mounting the wall, held it up before the eyes of the infidels, who were just going to leap into the inner court, and, blinded by the light, which streamed in brilliant rays from the Blessed Sacrament, the terrified men fell back, and the convent was left in peace.

Once more a troop encamped beneath the walls of Assisi, under a clever general, but S. Clare and her nuns scattered ashes upon their heads, and wept, and sighed before God, praying for the deliverance of their city, and their supplication prevailed, and the enemies were driven away utterly defeated.

During a famine the nuns suffered want as well as the other inhabitants of that part, and at length came to their last morsel of bread ; but Clare gave orders for it to be divided and one half sent to the friars, whilst the re-

mainder should be distributed amongst the community in portions.

"But, mother, it will need the help of a miracle to divide this bread into sufficient pieces," said the sister who had received the command; upon which the holy abbess smilingly bade her do what was told her, and the bread multiplied in her hands, so that there was enough for the meal of all the sisters that day. Another time oil was miraculously supplied to them in answer to the prayer of this true servant of God, who turned to Him in her necessity with such trust and love. When S. Clare had passed forty years in poverty and penance she became very feeble, and grew gradually weaker until her death. During her illness she was always in prayer or asking to have the sacred Passion of Christ read to her, and as her hope of leaving the world became surer, the expression of her face grew radiant with joy.

On the evening of the 10th of August the nuns who were attending her, saw a number of

white-robed virgins appear, following Mary, who entered the poor cell, bent over the dying Saint, and kissed her lovingly, as the virgins threw a royal mantle over her worn habit.

Next day Clare died, and her body was carried to the church where her holy Father Francis had been carried years before, whilst the entire populace followed in her honour; and there, some time later, a splendid church was built where her sacred relics were enshrined, and to which her daughters removed that they might dwell by the tomb of their mother and foundress, whose virtues had shone so brightly, whose holiness had brought down God's blessing upon her Order, and whose name should live ever to the glory of her Lord throughout the Catholic Church.





S. Elizabeth of Hungary.

THERE is a little golden blossom growing on many of the heaths and mountain sides of Germany, which the peasants call "Elizabeth's Flower," in memory of the Saint who dwelt in their land long ago, the child of Andrew, the pious King of Hungary, and his Queen Gertrude.

These parents had been happy when God gave them this little daughter, but their joy increased as they heard her baby tongue first lisp the Names of Jesus and Mary, because they believed she would grow up to be a very holy servant of Christ.

Before Elizabeth was four years old, a rich prince asked her parents to promise her to his

son Louis when she was of an age to marry, and, though they grieved to part with her, they granted this request, because they thought it was for her good, giving her into the care of this German landgrave, who, with many nobles and ladies in attendance journeyed with her into Thuringia, which was to be her home. The young Prince Louis was then eleven years of age, and from that time they were brought up together, calling each other by the names of brother and sister.

The good landgrave tried to make the little stranger child happy, and chose out some of the noblest girls of her own age belonging to his court for her companions, one of whom stayed with her nearly all her life. This friend was named "Guta," and she has told a great deal about the Saint's early days in Thuringia.

The little Elizabeth was very merry and fond of play, but she loved God so much that in the midst of her amusements she thought of Him, and often she would hop on one foot

to the castle chapel with her young friends hopping after her, and even if she found the door fastened she would kiss it, and kiss the lock and the walls, for love of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament Who dwelt there.

Before she was old enough to read, she would go to the altar steps, and putting a great, open psalter before her, folded her tiny hands reverently, thinking of God, and praying to Him. At other times she would persuade the children to go with her to the cemetery, and offer up prayers for the souls of those persons who had been buried there. If a child loves Jesus so much she becomes very sweet and gentle, and thus Elizabeth's companions delighted to be with her, and they declared that the Holy Child Himself came frequently to play with her. She fixed upon certain prayers to say every day, but if anything kept her from finishing all, she would pray quietly to God, as she lay in bed, while others supposed her to be sleeping.

Elizabeth began, even as a young child, to

practise giving up her will every day in little trifling things, so that she might be imitating Jesus, and getting ready to make larger sacrifices for Him when she grew older. In the midst of a game, when she was enjoying herself the most, she would stop, saying,

“Now I am quite full of happiness—I will leave off for the love of God.”

And in dancing, which she liked so much, she would cease when she had made one turn, exclaiming, “That will do for the world; the rest I will give up for Jesus Christ.”

This gentle little Elizabeth had placed herself particularly under the protection of the Blessed Virgin; but she had so great a love for S. John the Evangelist that she chose him for her patron saint, and remained faithful in her devotion to him until the end of her life. From her infancy, Elizabeth had felt an intense love for the poor, and a great desire to relieve them, and, as she grew older, she gave away all the money which was allowed her, and would go through the passages and

kitchens of the castle, seeking the scraps of meat and bread which were cast aside by the servants, but received so gratefully by the half-starved beggars who came to ask alms at the gate.

Thus, in prayers, and amusements, and good works, the time passed, until Elizabeth was nine years old, and then a great sorrow happened to her. Since she had been in Thuringia she had heard of the death of her own mother—now the good landgrave, the father of her future husband, was taken from her to her very great grief, for he had loved her as dearly as if she had been his own child, and after he died the landgravine and the other ladies of the court turned against the little Elizabeth, and treated her unkindly. All they complained of was the manner of life she led, her love of the poor, her desire for prayer; and they said she was unfit for a princess, and ought not to be the wife of Louis. But through all this, we are told that no angry or impatient words escaped her; the

more harsh they were, so much the more did she fix her heart on God, whose love made up for all she suffered.

One year, upon the Feast of the Assumption, the landgravine desired Elizabeth and her own daughter Agnes to put on their richest dresses, and crowns of gold, and go with her to the large church in Eisenach to hear Mass in honour of the Blessed Virgin. They obeyed, and accompanied her to the city, and into the church, where places had been specially prepared for them; but at the sight of the crucifix Elizabeth forgot the landgravine's presence, and, taking off her golden crown, lay prostrate on the ground.

"What is this for, my Lady Elizabeth?" said the landgravine, angrily. "Cannot you behave better than an ill-brought-up child? Do you find your crown too heavy that you lie crouching there like a peasant girl?"

Then Elizabeth rose, and with great humility and sweetness answered, "Be not angry, dear lady. How can I wear gold and jewels when

I see before me God my King adorned with sharp thorns? *My* crown would be a mockery of His!"

And she wept so bitterly, covering her eyes with the folds of her mantle, that the princesses could not help doing the same, and hiding their faces also, although in their hearts they were more than ever displeased with her.

But the dislike to Elizabeth grew with her growth, and some of the greatest counsellors urged the young landgrave to send her back to her father, while his mother would have wished to place her in a convent, so that she could never be his wife.

Elizabeth was often very sad when she heard such things said of her; she felt lonely in that foreign land away from her home, and without any father's care; but God her Father in heaven had her in His keeping, and when she was most sorrowful she would kneel before her crucifix, and pour out her heart in prayer, and then, with fresh peace of mind, would

return to her companions without a shadow upon her sweet face.

Although so much was done to make Louis dislike his future wife, he never ceased to love her, and when he returned home after his short absences he would bring her some little gift as a proof of his affection. Once, however, he omitted doing this, which caused Elizabeth some pain, and one of the young nobles who had come with her from Hungary spoke to Louis, asking him if he meant to break his word, and let her return home to her father. The landgrave sprang to his feet, declaring he would never give her up, that he loved her more because of the piety which all condemned, and very soon afterwards his marriage with Elizabeth took place at the Castle of Wartburg, when he was twenty, and she about thirteen years old.

Louis of Thuringia was worthy to be the husband of the Saint, for he also loved God above all things, and they lived very happily together; but her affection for him never

caused her to neglect her prayer, or the works of charity she had practised before. Constantly in the cold winter nights she would rise to meditate upon the birth of Jesus in the chilly darkness of the stable at Bethlehem; she would go away from rich banquets having eaten nothing but dry bread, and yet, though she was hard with herself, she was so happy and had such a bright joyous countenance, that every one felt peace and comfort in her presence.

It pleased God in return for her faithful love to show some wonderful signs of His grace upon her. Once she was sitting down alone to a meal of bread and water, when Louis happened to come in quite unexpectedly, and raising his wife's cup to his lips, he found it full of a richer wine than he had ever before tasted. He asked the steward from whence he had drawn it, but when he heard that Elizabeth's cup was never filled with anything but water, Louis said no more, for he saw now that it was the work of Almighty God in

blessing for the love she gave to Him and His poor.

Although the dear Saint's gifts to the sick and suffering were so constant, she also waited upon them and visited them herself, no matter how keen the wind, or how rough and steep the road which led to their dwellings. She also obtained the landgrave's permission to build a hospital half-way upon the rock where the castle stood, so that about twenty-eight sick people might be received there who were too weak to climb up the hill to the gate for relief. These she visited every day, carrying them food with her own hands, washing their sores and kissing their feet in the greatness of her charity.

It happened once that as Elizabeth, with her servant, was coming down a very steep path, she suddenly met her husband and a company of nobles returning from a day's hunting. She was almost bending beneath the weight of bread, meat, and eggs she was carrying to the poor, and folding her cloak

tightly round her, stood aside to let them pass by; but Louis insisted on knowing what she had with her, and opening her mantle, he saw with surprise that it was filled with the most beautiful red and white roses he had ever beheld, and it was the more astonishing because the season for such flowers was long since passed. But the dear Saint was so troubled by God's favours to her being thus made public, that Louis tried to soothe her, but he drew back with reverence as he saw the light of a glowing silvery crucifix appearing above her head, and bidding her farewell, he rode homeward musing over God's wonders, carrying with him one of the miraculous roses, which he wore near his heart to the day of his death. Meantime Elizabeth, with great simplicity, went on her way, and when she reached the homes of the sick and destitute, the roses had vanished, and the food for their relief was again visible.

As time passed on the landgrave and his young wife had several children given them

by God, and soon after the birth of each one the mother would take the newly-born baby up the steep path to the church of S. Catherine, and there offer it upon the altar, beseeching God with many tears to make the little one grow up His friend and servant.

While the life of Elizabeth was passed in these lovely deeds of charity and holiness, Germany was calling upon all her princely knights to gather together in a fresh crusade to wrest the holy sepulchre of Christ from the power of the infidel Turks. Louis of Thuringia joined the number, and received the cross worn by crusaders from the hands of the Bishop of Hildesheim. It was a terrible sorrow to the Saint when she heard that he was leaving her, and at first she cried bitterly, begging him to remain at home ; but when he told her that he felt called by the love of Jesus Christ to undertake this holy cause, she ceased weeping, and, begging God to watch over him, bade him farewell. They never met on earth again, for the brave Louis was one of the first .

to be slain ; he had gone for the love of God, and he died for that love willingly, without a murmur or regret.

Poor Elizabeth ! Now, indeed, she was solitary. "I have lost everything," she said. "Oh ! my Jesus, strengthen my weakness." Just at first every one pitied her, but very soon the old dislike to her returned, all manner of evil things were spoken of her, and at last her cruel relations drove her from the castle with her little fatherless children, and not even those whom she had fed in their hunger would shelter her. From door to door she went, only to be turned away. Like Jesus, her Master, she "had not where to lay her head ;" but at length she was admitted into a miserable little inn, and put to sleep in an out-house where pigs were usually kept. While resting there she heard the bell of the Franciscan church close by, and hastening to the friars, she begged that the "Te Deum" might be sung, in thanksgiving for the humiliation and suffering God had sent her ; and as the

music rose up to heaven, peace and joy filled her sad heart, and never again left it. But though dear S. Elizabeth was glad to suffer so as to be more like Christ when He was on earth, she could not bear to hear her little children crying with cold and hunger, therefore she resolved to bear the pain of sending them away from her, and some friend took them to places of safety.

But though every one forsook Elizabeth, God took care of her, and gave her more and more wonderful proofs of His great love, allowing her many times to have beautiful visions of Christ and the Blessed Virgin, which comforted her in her great sufferings.

After a time the Landgravine Sophia and her sons were sorry for their treatment of the Saint, and restored to her a great part of her property, so that her children were provided for, but Elizabeth chose for herself a life of continual poverty and hardship. Her coarse dress was patched with all shades and colours ; she worked for her bread by preparing wool

for spinning, and took part with her two companions, Isentrude and Guta, in the labour of their home.

It was God's Will that Elizabeth should become quite perfect in suffering, so He even allowed the priest, who was her confessor and a very holy man, to be often severe and harsh with her, giving her difficult commands to obey, and humbling her by great penances which needed much patience and gentleness to bear; but through every trial the Saint drew nearer to God, setting all her love upon Him, never failing in obedience to her confessor, whom she regarded in the place of Jesus Christ. Even when he sent away her two early friends, and put in their places coarse, rough women, who were very unkind to her, she behaved with perfect sweetness and submission, although at first the parting with her beloved companions made her shed many tears.

Soon she was to receive her reward, for one night, at the close of the year 1231, as Elizabeth lay praying in her bed, she had a vision of our

Lord in the midst of a golden brightness, Who bade her prepare for her approaching death. She arose, and began very gladly to arrange for her burial, visit her poor friends, and divide the few things she possessed between them and her two companions ; and after four days she felt the beginning of illness. For a fortnight she suffered from violent fever, but she was almost continually engaged in prayer, and was quite calm and happy. One evening, when Elizabeth seemed to be sleeping, the woman who watched her heard a sweet soft song coming from her lips, and afterwards she exclaimed,

“ Oh, madam, how beautifully you have been singing.”

“ Did you hear it ?” said the Saint. “ I will tell you how it was. A little bird came and sang so sweetly to me that I could but sing with him, and he revealed to me that I shall die in three days.”

From that moment she refused to see any visitors, desiring to keep herself alone with

God; she made her confession to the Blessed Conrad, and afterwards talked with him of God and the joys of heaven; then, having heard Mass, she received the last sacraments with a love only known to Jesus, and on the night of the 19th November she died, having just reached the age of twenty-four years.

Those who came to look at her in death said that never before had she appeared so beautiful, for the glory of her wonderful holiness rested upon her sweet calm face, a fragrant perfume was observed in the room where her body was lying, and angel voices were heard singing above her.

Four years afterwards, when all the accounts of her life had been made known, the Pope declared Elizabeth a Saint in heaven, whose name was to be honoured in the Church on earth; and the tidings spread far and wide, so that pilgrims from all countries began to visit her shrine, to make prayers and offerings there.

And now, in closing this story of Elizabeth's childish days, and the sweet suffering life she

led when she grew older, we will put here a little prayer which has been addressed to the Saint, begging her to get us grace to love and serve God as she did.

“ Oh, dear S. Elizabeth, I honour thy pious childhood, I grieve for thy sufferings and persecutions. Why have I not passed my first years in holiness ? why have I not borne my little sorrows patiently ? I entreat thee, by thy blessed childhood, crush my childish wilfulness and sin, and by thy great patience obtain for me the pardon of all my faults. Amen.”





S. Anthony of Padua.

NEAR the cathedral in Lisbon there was a handsome mansion, where a noble soldier lived who had fought very bravely for the liberty of his country. This was the father of the little Ferdinand, afterwards called Anthony of Padua.

From a baby this child's good mother tried to plant in his heart a great love to God, and her constant prayer was that he might become a priest. As soon as he was old enough, little Ferdinand was sent to school to the priests at the cathedral, and he grew very fond of prayer, often getting up in the night to be present when they said the Divine Office. Every one noticed the thoughtful face and modest be-

haviour of this boy, and his parents soon felt sure that God had called him to His own service; so at the age of fifteen he went to the canons of S. Vincent, where he received the habit of a religious. But while he was there, Ferdinand saw his friends so often that he began to desire to be more separated from them, lest they should take any of his thoughts or love from God, so he went to his superior and begged to be allowed to go to another convent.

At first the prior refused to let him go, but Ferdinand pleaded so hard that he obtained leave to make this change, and bid farewell to his native place. The monks at the Holy Cross were those who received him next; and as Ferdinand advanced in the love of God, and grew more holy and humble, it was plain that he had done well to come amongst them.

His love to his brothers was so great, that although his greatest joy was to be present at holy Mass, he would give it up quite willingly to help any of them in the commonest work of the house if his superior bid him go; and no

matter where he was, or what he might be doing, when he heard the bell at the Elevation he would adore Jesus upon his knees just the same as if he had been before the altar.

Near to Ferdinand's convent there was a community of Franciscans, who had a chapel dedicated to S. Anthony the Abbot, and here the young religious loved to pray, and talk to the monks of the joys of heaven and the goodness of God. The great poverty of these Franciscan friars made a great impression upon him. He loved, too, the austere life they led, and a great desire came into his heart to live under their rule, and gain souls to God by preaching the faith as they did.

About this time there came the news that five Franciscans had been martyred in Morocco; and their remains were to be brought to Coimbra. Great preparations were made to show the joy which the people felt in having these holy relics in their city, and a procession; with the bishop and priests, went out to meet them.

The king and queen, with many of the court, walked by the side of the mule which carried these relics of the martyrs to the cathedral, where they were to be placed. But nothing could persuade the animal to go that way ; in spite of all that was done to force it into the right road, it turned obstinately towards the convent of the Holy Cross, into the church itself, and there bent its knees before the high altar, staying so until its burden was taken from it.

Every one felt sure this could not have happened unless God had permitted it, so the relics remained with the monks of the Holy Cross, to their great joy. Ferdinand was constantly kneeling at the shrine, begging God to admit him into the order of S. Francis, and to let him also shed his blood for Christ like those blessed martyrs had done, and once when he was praying so, the holy Francis appeared to him miraculously, bidding him become one of his friars.

After that Ferdinand sought his superior,

telling him all that he wished, and this strange vision he had seen, and the monks let him go, although they were grieved to part with him. Hastening to the Franciscan convent, Ferdinand received their rough, coarse habit, and his name was changed to Anthony, in honour of the abbot to whom the chapel was dedicated. Now he found that he was in the place God called him to, which was to prepare him to work for the salvation of souls.

His great wish had been to go to Morocco, and after learning his new rule he was allowed to start upon the voyage to Africa. But directly he landed he became ill from fever, and during the winter which followed, he was never able to leave his bed. It was a hard trial, just when he seemed to have gained all he hoped for, but it was made known to him in prayer that his work was not to be done in Morocco, but amongst the Christians of Europe.

Anthony was only anxious to do what God desired, so he began at once to prepare to re-

turn to Portugal, and started on his voyage. But a contrary wind drove the ship out of its course to the island of Sicily, so that they had to anchor at Messina. There were some Franciscans dwelling in the city, and Anthony hastened to them; but when he heard that nearly all the friars had gone to Assisi to meet their Father Francis, he set out also to that place, taking a young companion with him.

By the time Anthony arrived, the meeting was over, and the Franciscans were forming themselves into little companies to settle in different places; so he obtained leave to join one of them, who were going to the neighbourhood of Bologna, and there he was made cook for the others.

Anthony began his humble duties gladly, and would have been willing to remain always thus, leading a severe life, and keeping strict silence. On the mountain a cell had been hollowed out, which was so exposed to the heat of summer and the cold of winter that none could dwell there without great suffering of

body, and here Anthony got leave to stay, receiving such graces from God, that he cared nothing for the hardness of his life.

But he was now twenty-seven years of age, and an order came for him to go with some other friars to Forli, to receive holy orders. Some young Dominican brothers were also there, and it happened after supper one night that some one proposed one of them should give an instruction to the rest. They all refused, saying they had made no preparation. The Franciscans were asked, and they also excused themselves, until the superior turned to Anthony—"You shall preach the word of God to us, then, since the others will not," he said.

The Saint was very much distressed. He pleaded his ignorance, he said that he had no learning, and could only sweep and wash dishes; but in vain—he was forced to obey, and God gave him such eloquence and earnestness, as he spoke of the dignity of being called to the life of a priest, that every one present was astonished and delighted. His superiors

were now sure that God intended Anthony to gain souls by his preaching, so they set him to study hard, that he might be ready for this duty, and also able to teach in the schools; and from this time Anthony became known by the power he gained over the hearts of others.

One day, when preaching at Bourges, so many people flocked to hear him that no building in the town was large enough to admit them, so a pulpit was formed in an open space outside the gates, to which the crowd followed him. Scarcely had Anthony begun his sermon than the bright summer day clouded over, and a flash of lightning was seen, which so terrified the people that they began to move off for shelter in the approaching storm; but the Saint cried out, "Christians, do not go away. Remain where you are, and I promise, in the Name of our Lord that not a drop of rain shall fall on you." The people remained still there as the holy preacher continued speaking to them, and though the rain fell heavily all round, and the crops in

the fields were beaten down by hail-stones, the sky was bright and clear above the heads of the congregation, as a mark of the favour with which God regarded the words of Anthony.

A wonderful answer was once given to the Saint's prayer, which has led to the great faith all Catholics have in his power with God, in finding for them things which they have missed or lost, and in helping them in every difficulty. A novice had been received into the house, who, unfortunately, gave way to the temptations of the evil one, and was led to turn from the good course he had begun, so that at length he ran away secretly from his brothers one night, carrying with him a psalter he had stolen from S. Anthony. In those times books were far more difficult to obtain than they are nowadays, and the Saint being much grieved at his loss, knelt down before a crucifix to implore God to restore him his missing volume. Just then the thief was crossing a bridge, and some terrible monster rose up before him armed with a battle-axe; threatening to strike

him if he did not at once return the psalter to his master.

The terrified youth hurried back to the monastery, and throwing himself at the feet of S. Anthony, acknowledged his sin, and begged permission return to the community, which, being very penitent, he was allowed to do. Thus the Saint's simplicity and confidence were rewarded by Heaven.

Part of his work was the giving of missions, and during one of these he was staying at the house of a gentleman who was very glad to have one so holy under his roof. But he felt some curiosity to know whether a man who preached so wonderfully gave any time in the night to study, instead of resting, so he rose up once and went noiselessly to the door of his guest's chamber. A wondrous vision met his gaze, for through a chink of the door he saw that the room was glowing with light, and there was a most lovely child, whom S. Anthony was embracing in a rapture of love. It was, indeed, the Lord Jesus in the form of

an infant, and as this gentleman gazed with awe and reverence, he saw the Saint bow before his Infant Saviour again and again, then rise once more to lavish upon Him the most tender caresses. In the morning Anthony sent for his host, beseeching him never in his lifetime to reveal what he had seen, for God had made it known to the Saint that he had been secretly watched ; the promise was given and faithfully kept.

In this way Anthony pursued his course through the countries of Italy and Sicily ; preaching the faith, teaching the simple and ignorant, encouraging those who needed help, but he was always closely united to God, and no cares or anxieties caused him to lose the thought of the Divine Presence.

Wonderful success attended his preaching, for his fervent love drew souls to God, and many miracles were permitted to be worked by him ; yet, like his Lord, he was hated and falsely accused by many who wished to injure him. Once a party of heretics asked him to

dine, in the hope of getting him to eat some poisoned meats, which would end his life, but God showed S. Anthony what had been done, and he spoke to these unhappy men very lovingly and earnestly of the sin they had tried to commit. Then one of them promised for himself and the others, that if the Saint would show them the power of God, by eating of these dishes without being hurt by them, they would all be baptized. By himself Anthony could not have done this, but by the power of the Almighty, he knew that it was possible, and lifting up his heart to Heaven in prayer, he accepted their offer, and eat the poisoned food without being hurt by it in the least way. The heretics were so struck by this proof of God's protecting care, that they kept their word, and giving up their errors, were received into the Church of Christ.

Anthony now had worked hard in preaching and teaching, he began to long for a quiet time alone with God, so he went to Mount Alvernia (where S. Francis had received the

marks of Christ's sacred Passion), that he might give himself wholly to prayer and penance. For some while he dwelt there in a little hut, which was miserable to look at, but in his eyes a happy, blessed spot, because God gave him so many helps and graces there ; but when Lent came he left it to go and preach his last mission in the city of Padua.

People had always flocked round him, but never so many followed him as at that time, even from the villages and towns round about ; and in order to secure good places, they thought nothing of collecting near his pulpit over-night, so that they might be ready to hear him preach God's Word next morning.

The town itself looked almost deserted, the shops were closed, for scarce any one thought of buying and selling—the people were listening eagerly to the earnest words of Anthony, and they even pressed near him when he passed to his dwelling, trying to touch his habit or to cut morsels from it, which they preserved as relics.

During this mission God allowed the devil to visit His servant one night when he had gone to rest very weary with the day's toil, and Anthony was nearly strangled by him ; but making the sign of the Cross, he began to sing a little Latin hymn to the Blessed Virgin, and at the mention of her name the tempter vanished and appeared to him no more, whilst the cell was illumined with a golden light which filled his soul with joy.

At length the mission ended, and Anthony being aware that he would not live long, obtained leave to go to a quiet little convent about four miles from the city, where he might prepare his soul to meet God.

Close by in the forest, there was a little cave, to which he went for greater retirement, but feeling his weakness greater, he set out for Padua, that he might die there.

However, it was at Ara Coeli that he passed away, at a convent just outside the city, where he had every care which could be given him in the hope that his useful life might last yet

a little longer ; but God's Will was that Anthony should die, and he grew quickly worse. On the 13th of June, after receiving Holy Communion, his face was raised to heaven, glowing with such an unearthly light that some one by his bed-side asked at what he was gazing. "Dear brothers," he answered, "I behold my Lord."

Then a priest hastened to anoint him, with the brothers kneeling round, mingling tears with their prayers, and his soul passed peacefully away, without a struggle or sign of pain being visible.

The gates of *Ara Coeli* were crowded when the news spread ; men and women flocked there questioning and weeping, little children ran about the streets saying, "Alas ! the Saint is dead," and it was only with difficulty that the town could be kept in peace, so afraid were the inhabitants that the sacred body might be removed from Padua.

Five days after his death the Saint was buried in the church of S. Mary's, and upon

the first day miracles were worked by touching the stone which covered his body. Lords and ladies knelt there with choice offerings, the poor whom he had loved, the sinful whom he had reconciled to God, all flocked to the spot, and it very soon became a place of pilgrimage for all Europe. S. Anthony did not live to a great age, he died when he was but thirty-six years old ; but it was a wonderful life of acts done for God, of days and years given to His service, of faithfulness to every inspiration of the Holy Spirit, which won for him the reward in this world of leading many souls to the feet of Christ crucified, and in heaven a place amongst the saints for ever.





S. Benedict.

THIS Saint, whom God raised up as the father of the great Benedictine family, was born of noble Roman parents, in the province of Nursia, about the year 500. When old enough to begin his education, he was sent into the city of Rome, but as he began to advance, he became so fearful lest the love of knowledge should wean him from the love of God, that he resolved to leave his studies, and go to dwell in some solitary place, where he might give all his time to prayer and meditation. His old nurse insisted upon following him, so they commenced their journey, during which it pleased Almighty God to work a miracle at the prayer

of this boy. To the very great distress of the nurse, a sieve which she had borrowed to winnow a little wheat, got broken. Benedict was so sorry to see her in such grief, that he took the sieve in his hands, and kneeling down, put the two broken pieces together, whilst he prayed earnestly for a few minutes, and then gave it back to her quite whole, and without a sign of the accident which had happened to it.

But it seemed as if even the care and affection of one creature was a hindrance to the work which God was doing in the soul of Benedict, for he escaped from the presence of the nurse, and reached a place about forty miles from Rome, where the mountain streamlets had collected into a lake, from which a little river flowed. As he hastened towards this spot, a monk named Romanus met him, and inquired where he was going, and when Benedict told him he was seeking a desert place, where he would be alone with God, Romanus gave him a habit and other things of which he stood in

need. Afterwards he left the monastery where he dwelt, at a certain hour each day, to visit Benedict in his solitude, and give him part of his own food, but as there was no regular path from the mountain to the cave, he fastened a long string from the top of the rock, to which he attached a little bell which gave Benedict notice to come and receive the bread which was lowered to him.

For several years the pious hermit lived thus unknown, but at length he was discovered by some shepherds, who spread such a story of his sanctity, that many persons began to find their way to him, some from curiosity, others from a desire to get good from his holy words.

There was a monastery not far off, whose abbot died, upon which the community visited Benedict's cave, and begged him to come and rule them, to which he consented. But the monks there had grown careless in their religious practices, and they grew weary of Benedict's strictness, and the habit of yielding

to temptation in slight things was the cause of their falling into greater sins, until at last they were so wicked as to desire to take the life of their holy superior. For this purpose they mixed poison with his wine, and when the cup containing it was given him to bless according to their usual custom, Benedict extended his hand, making the sign of the cross, whereupon the glass broke into countless pieces, exactly as if it had been struck by a stone. The Saint knew then the wrong they had committed, but he reproved them mildly, asking them why—even if they disliked his austere way of life—they should sin against Almighty God? Then bidding them seek another abbot, he left the monastery, returning to his former happy solitude.

The miracles which, by the power of Heaven, he worked there, added to his many virtues, attracted people to visit him, and in time he drew together so many men, who were all filled with the desire to devote their lives to the service of God, that he built

twelve monasteries in that part, where they received the young sons of the best families of Rome, who were brought by their parents for instruction.

A boy named Placidus went out one day, to draw water from the lake, and in stooping, he fell forward into the water, and was carried some distance by the stream. When it happened Benedict was at prayer in his cell, but being warned by God of the accident, he summoned another of the household, to whom he said, "Brother, that boy who went to draw water has been carried away by the stream ; run quickly to his help."

Maurus just paused to kneel for his superior's blessing, and then hurried off to the water, but in his excitement when he saw Placidus apparently sinking, he ran straight over the lake, seized him by the hair, and brought him safely back before he remembered what an extraordinary thing had occurred to him.

Then, when he saw how it had been, and that he had actually been running upon

water, he rushed to the holy Benedict, to relate what he had done, which the Saint declared to be the reward of the monk's obedience, not because of his own prayers.

In all times the saints and servants of God have been hated and persecuted by wicked men, and because S. Benedict persuaded so many persons to begin to live a life of strictness and self-sacrifice, some spoke evil of him, and one man became so full of malice, that he sent him a loaf of poisoned bread. The saintly monk received it with thanks, although he knew its contents would cause his death if he eat of it, and this is what he decided to do. A crow out of the forest near by, had grown accustomed to come at a certain hour and feed out of Benedict's hand, so when it appeared as usual, he threw the loaf down before it, saying, "In the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, I bid thee take away this bread, and carry it where it is not possible for any one to find it." The crow fluttered round and round the loaf trying to obey, at which the

Saint repeated his command, adding, "Do not fear—lift it up," and at length the bird managed to fix his beak in the bread, and carried it away, returning after about three hours' absence, for its accustomed meal.

But as the man who had planned this way of causing the monk's death, still persisted in hating him, Benedict left that place, and removed to Monte Cassino. While he dwelt there, he was terribly tempted by the devil, who showed himself in many horrible shapes, but Benedict always took refuge in prayer, and thus overcame his enemy, receiving daily fresh gifts and graces from God, as a reward for his faithfulness.

A new monastery was built in this place, to which many came for admission, so that the order increased constantly, watched over by the careful eye of their holy superior. Once a famine overspread that part of the country, and food was so scarce, that upon that day, only five loaves remained in the house, neither did the brothers know of any

means of getting any more. Benedict, noticing their anxious faces, said, "Why are you cast down? There is indeed little for to-day, but to-morrow there shall be abundance." Next day, two hundred bushels of flour were found in sacks at the monastery gates, which God had sent His servants, although they never knew the way in which it had been brought to them.

About five miles from the monastery, in the valley at the foot of the mountains, Scholastica, the sister of the holy Benedict, dwelt with her community of nuns, of whom she was abbess. She delighted in receiving the advice and help of her brother, so that the love of God should increase in her soul, and once a year she came to a certain spot, where Benedict, with two of his monks, met her, and spoke of spiritual things.

The last time they met thus, a whole day had passed in this holy conversation, and as it began to grow late, the monk prepared to return to Monte Cassino, but Scholastica en-

treated him to remain, and talk with her of God until the morning.

“What is it thou sayest, my sister? I can in nowise remain out of my cell.”

It was a calm, still evening, not a cloud was in the sky, to foreshadow a coming storm, but the holy abbess bowed her head upon her folded hands, and begged God to grant her desire, and as she looked up, it began to thunder and lighten heavily, and the rain fell in such torrents, that Benedict and his monks could not cross the threshold of the place where they, were. Then he exclaimed, “Oh, my sister! what hast thou done?” upon which Scholastica replied, “I asked of thee a favour, which thou didst refuse, but God has granted it to me.” Being forced to remain, the monks passed the entire night in spiritual conversation, and when morning broke the brother returned to his monastery, and the sister to her convent, but they had met for the last time on earth.

Three days afterwards, Benedict was pray-

ing in his cell, when he saw the soul of his sister ascending under the form of a pure white dove to heaven, at which he thanked and praised God, and telling the news of her death to his brethren, they fetched the body from the convent gates, and buried it in the grave which had been already prepared for Benedict.

Fourteen years that life of prayer and penance and austere rule went on at Monte Cassino; then the Saint announced that his death was at hand; he became ill, and after six days requested his brethren to carry him in their arms to the church of the monastery.

There, supported upon each side, he received the most Holy Eucharist, and leaning back, with his feeble hands raised to heaven, passed peacefully away, a prayer upon his lips in death, as there had ever been during his holy life.





S. Dominic.

THERE was a Saint who drew all men to him by the charm of his courteous manner, and by his tenderness for suffering in others; one who hated sin yet loved sinners, spending his life and strength in preaching the word of God; and this was Dominic Gusman, the founder of the order of Friars Preachers, who was born in Spain during the year 1170. His was a saintly family, so that from his cradle he was trained to holiness by his mother, who before his birth had received a strange vision which foretold the future greatness of her son. At seven years of age he was put under the care of his uncle, who was a priest, and the little Dominic

grew up close to the altar, loving nothing so well as his prayers and hymns and the serving holy Mass.

At fourteen he was sent to the University of Palencia, and while he remained there, he was not only diligent in study, but also distinguished by the purity of his life. It seemed as if no worldly matter could give him pleasure, because his heart was quite set upon spiritual things, and though but a boy, those who spoke to him always felt the better for his words, which were full of the love of God. At the commencement of his college days, Dominic made a rule to abstain entirely from wine, and during the ten years he stayed at Palencia, no example or persuasion led him to be unfaithful in this point.

Very little is known of the Saint during the first twenty years of his life, excepting one or two examples of his tender, unselfish nature. A dreadful famine prevailed in Spain, during which Dominic not only sold all his clothing to get food for the poor, but even parted with

his precious books, so that he might give more to the starving people whose misery touched his heart. "Would you have me study those parchments when men are dying with hunger?" he said to one who was surprised at this act and then the others were roused to try also to assist in the pressing need of those around them.

Again we find Dominic offering himself to be sold as a ransom for the son of a poor woman who had been captured by the Moors, which shows us his generous character, although his proposal was not allowed to be carried out.

At twenty-five years old Dominic became a priest, receiving the habit of the Canons Regular at Osma. For nine years he stayed there, giving himself continually to prayer—his one petition that he might receive the gift of true charity, and he determined, so soon as it was possible, to found an Order on purpose to preach the faith.

The state of the Church was most unhappy

just at that period; heathens were fighting against Christians, and heresy was making itself known, and during a journey to Denmark, Dominic and his companion, Diego, saw so much work to be done for God in the world, that their hearts burned within them to become true apostles for the faith. On their homeward road they rested at Montpellier, just at a time when an assembly of Catholics had met there to think and pray over the best means of checking the heresy which was springing up everywhere, and Dominic and Diego were invited to join them in their meetings. Diego asked many questions, and found that the heretics got their power over men by their preaching and persuasive manners, and a great outward show of poverty and austerity. Then the Holy Spirit of God inspired him, and he proposed that all the priests should dismiss their attendants and horses, and keeping no appearance of worldly power, go as simple missionaries amongst the people. They agreed, and Diego was made the head of the little com-

pany, who went about on foot through the towns and villages, trusting to God to provide for their daily wants, while they taught and preached as they journeyed.

At first Dominic was little thought of, for he had only taken the part of a subject, but his usefulness was found out in the disputes with the heretics, and he persuaded so many to return to the Church that those who still kept to their errors hated him as their worst enemy, even plotting to take his life. Finding that Catholic children were exposed to the danger of being educated by those who had forsaken their faith, Dominic resolved to find some way of preventing this, and choosing a small village at the foot of the Pyrenees, called Prouille, he founded a house, where, under the care of a few pious women, these children could be trained in the knowledge and love of God. This was the beginning of an Order which was to flourish all over the world in later times, but then it had only nine or ten members, who had been converted by the

preaching of Dominic. They wore a white habit and dark mantle, and besides giving a certain time to educating the children, they were to spend some hours in spinning and other work.

After this time Diego returned to Spain, to visit his own church and people, but his promise of returning to labour in France was never fulfilled, for he died in his own country, so that Dominic lost his friend and companion. The missionaries dispersed, one to one country, another to another, but Dominic remained at the post where God had placed him, although he was alone. During ten years he preached the faith in the different provinces of France, with very few to help him, bearing for the sake of Christ countless sufferings and sorrows, working miracles amongst the people for whom he laboured, and winning many hearts to the love of God.

But oftentimes the inhabitants of those places where he stayed, turned against him and threatened his life; still oftener they

shouted after him as he passed bare-footed along their streets, throwing dirt at him, and tying straws to his coat and hat, and through all this Dominic went cheerfully about, rejoicing that he was allowed to follow in the footsteps of his Master.

Once the Saint had come to the bank of the river Garonne, when about forty English pilgrims arrived on their way to the shrine of S. James of Compostella. They took a boat to cross to the other side, but being small it sank with them to the bottom of the river. Dominic was praying at the time in a small church near, and being alarmed by the cries of the sinking crew, he left his devotions, but when he came to the bank of the river not one of the pilgrims could be seen.

Full of faith in the power of God, the holy man knelt in prayer, then rising up, cried :—

“I command you in the Name of Christ to come alive and unhurt to the shore.”

Immediately the bodies rose to the surface of

the water, and safely reached the bank, praising and thanking God and S. Dominic.

Many miracles of a similar kind were worked by the Saint, which began to be known and spoken of amongst the people, and helped on the attention which was given to his preaching; but it was his singular holiness of life, his austere rule—and yet his constant cheerfulness—which gained him the most influence over the hearts of others.

And yet, in spite of all his labour, Dominic was not succeeding as he desired, so he began to entreat the help of the Blessed Mother of God, that it might be told him in what way he could best destroy the heresy of the people.

Mary herself appeared to her faithful client, and told him to teach the devotion of the Rosary, so Dominic took his stand at the market-place or in the principal streets, drawing men, women, and little children to listen as he put before them this beautiful way of prayer, explaining each mystery in a plain and

simple manner. However, for some time Dominic's work was hindered by the wars which prevailed, but afterwards two rich townsmen of Toulouse gave him a house, where others came to join him in his way of life, and the number gradually increased, keeping a rule of religious discipline.

The Saint travelled to Rome to obtain the Pope's protection for his little community, and while staying there, he had a vision, in which he saw two men whom the Blessed Virgin was offering to God to stay His anger against the sins of the world. One of the men he saw to be himself, but the other was not known to him; yet the very next morning when he was in the church praying, he saw the stranger of his vision dressed like a beggar, and running to him, Dominic embraced him with tears of joy, asking him to be his friend and join with him in labouring for God. From that time S. Francis (for he it was) and S. Dominic had a warm attachment to each other, and each in his own path fulfilled the work assigned to

him by God, whilst love to the Lord Jesus Christ bound their hearts together.

When Dominic returned to France he continued to teach and preach in the world. His community was growing quickly, and he ruled them well, sending them out in their turn as apostles amongst men. God was pleased to give many signs of the favour He had towards His servant, by supernatural favours and miracles. Once when some men were engaged at work at the convent, a mason was buried by a mass of earth falling on him, but S. Dominic ordered him to be dug out whilst he prayed, and when the rubbish was removed, the man rose alive and perfectly unhurt. Not long afterwards, a widow lady went to the church to hear the Saint preach, leaving her only son seriously ill, and on her return home he was dead. Bidding her servants carry after her the lifeless body, she went to Dominic, knelt at his feet, and in silence laid her dead son before him. Her sobs touched the compassionate heart of the holy man. For a few

moments he turned aside and prayed, then coming back he made the sign of the cross over the boy, took him by the hand, and gave him back to his mother alive and well.

The story spread quickly, and Dominic was so pained by the public honour he received, that he would have flown from France had not the Pope commanded him to remain. Many such incidents might be told, but there is one without naming which no life of this Saint would be complete. The friars were about a hundred in number when, on a certain day, the holy Dominic bid two of the brothers go into the city to beg. They obeyed, but received nothing for some hours, so that they returned to the convent, and were nearly there when they met a woman who revered the Order very much, and in her pity, because they had taken nothing, she gave them one loaf. As they went on their way they met a man who begged hard of them and persisted, in spite of their excuses; then they said to each other, "We will give him our loaf for the love of

God." He immediately disappeared, and they came to the convent where Dominic (to whom God had revealed all) met them and said, with a joyous air, "My sons, have you nothing?" They told him what had happened, and how they gave their only loaf to a poor beggar.

"It was an angel of God," said the Saint. "The Lord will provide for us; we will go and pray." Then he entered the church for a little time, coming out to bid the brothers call the rest to the refectory.

"But, father, why should we call them when there is nothing to eat?" and they delayed assembling the community.

Then the holy father commanded once more that all should repair to dinner; he gave the benediction, and one of the brothers began to read. Meantime Dominic joined his hands on the table, remaining in prayer, and suddenly two young men appeared in the middle of the refectory, carrying loaves in two white cloths which hung from their shoulders before and behind, and they began to distribute the bread,

beginning at the lower rows, placing a loaf before each brother. When they had reached the Blessed Dominic and placed a loaf before him, they bowed and disappeared without any one knowing how they went.

The Saint then said :—

“My sons, eat the bread which the Lord has sent you.” And bidding those who served go to the empty vessel which was used for wine, they found it miraculously filled up to the brim.

They ate and drank as much as they needed for that and the two next days, and then Dominic ordered what remained to be distributed amongst the poor, and gave the brothers a beautiful address, bidding them never to mistrust the power of God, however great might be their want.

Everything about the Saint showed how he loved poverty—his habit, his girdle, and all that he wore. He would not have any cell of his own, but slept in the church, leaning against the altar-steps or lying on the stones. His penances were

severe—many for himself, many for obstinate sinners, many for the souls in purgatory—and his prayer was constant, for there was no place or time in which he did not turn his heart and mind to God.

Time passed on, and this holy, useful life was drawing to a close. He would say to his brothers:—"You see me now in health, but before the next Feast of the Assumption I shall be with God;" but he did not lessen his labours, for after he received an intimation from Heaven that his end was near, he started from Bologna upon his last mission. When he returned, there was a great change in him, and the excessive heat tried him much, yet his zeal appeared to increase, as if he desired his Lord to find him at work when his summons came. It was the 6th of August when he re-entered his convent on foot, and going to the church, spent his usual time in prayer; but at its conclusion he was so evidently ill that he desired to be laid on a sack—ing stretched upon the ground, and had the

novices called round him that he might speak to them. His friars were in the deepest sorrow, and begged him to pray for them. The dying Saint said in a clear voice, with his eyes raised to heaven :—

“Holy Father, I commend those whom Thou hast given me to Thee. Do Thou keep them, do Thou preserve them.”

He then insisted upon being laid on ashes on the floor, and all the brethren being assembled, he gave them his last counsels, and begging them above all to have charity, to preserve humility, and make poverty their possession, he stretched out his arms towards heaven and died, being nearly fifty-one years of age.

Thus ended the life which had been devoted to the work of God with so much courage and generosity ; and the divine blessing which Dominic asked for his children when he lay upon his death-bed, has followed them in all times and places, for the once small company has become the great teaching Order of the

Church, treading in the footsteps of their holy founder, and striving to maintain the spirit of charity, poverty, and humility which burned so brightly in him.





S. Catherine of Siena.

QUR Lord, Who always loved the poor so much, has often chosen His special servants and saints from amongst them, and Catherine of Siena was one of these, for her father was only a dyer in that city, and her home was small and mean. As a very little child she loved to pray, and would go up the staircase, saying a Hail Mary at every step, coaxing her playmates to join her; yet her face was always so merry and bright, and her temper so sweet, that those who saw her called her "Euphrosyne," which means "gladness."

At six years old, she was one day passing by the church of S. Dominic, in charge of her

little brother, when happening to look up, she saw clearly our Blessed Lord, Who smiled sweetly upon her. The surprise was so great, that she stood motionless, with her eyes fixed upon the Divine figure, until her little brother, who, after trying to drag her on in vain, had left her side, came running back, and managed to rouse her by pulling her hand. During the moment she turned to speak to him, the beautiful vision disappeared, but the memory of it rested always in her heart, and filled it so full of the love of God, that from that time she cared for nothing except how to please Him most.

It always seemed to her that nothing would be so joyful as to be all alone in a wilderness with God. Perhaps this thought came to her mind from hearing of the holy fathers of the desert, but with constant brooding over it, her desire grew so strong, that one morning she took a loaf of bread, and set out to see if she could not reach some desert place. On and on she walked till noon—past the houses, past the

city gates, and at length she came to a cave by the road side, which she imagined must be the wilderness, so she went in, and falling on her knees, began to pray.

For two or three hours she was so happy, that she never thought of the uneasiness of her parents when they missed her, but when she remembered them, she was both sorry and afraid, for she feared it had been the evil spirit, instead of God, who had inspired her to go there. However, she rose up to return, but feeling weak and trembling, she could not stir, so she begged God to help her, and found herself at the gates of the city directly, and her parents had not been alarmed, for they supposed she had been all day with a married sister in the town. Catherine had a great love for S. Dominic, and as she grew older, she wanted very much to become a nun in one of the convents of that order, but her father and mother were displeased, and, as they fancied she would not have this desire, if she was not so often praying in the church,

they determined to prevent it altogether, by having her married.

Catherine had always been a most obedient daughter, but in this case she felt sure that God's Will was not the same as theirs, so she refused to marry, and begged them not to speak of it again. Her mother was determined to prevent her having much time to pray, so the thought struck her that she would send away the servant, and force Catherine to spend the day in cooking and cleaning. But her patience and good-humour gained the victory at last, after a great many sorrows and trials, and when she was eighteen years old, her mother gave her consent to Catherine receiving the Dominican habit.

Much as she had always tried to please and serve God, she tried harder now, surrounded by all the helps and graces of religion, and her generous determination to follow wherever He might lead her, and to hold back nothing from so good a God, made her advance in holiness every day. The first three years were spent in great retirement, in which

God gave her many strange and beautiful visions, making known to her what he wished her to do; then he called her to leave her quiet life and give herself up to work for Him in the great busy world, where so many souls were living and dying in sorrow and sin.

Catherine was quite ready to obey the voice of God, and as a great and terrible plague was raging in so many of the cities of Europe, she spent her time in waiting upon the sick and dying, and besides helping many to make their peace with God, she received the power of healing others miraculously.

Everything was not easy for Catherine; great graces were given her, but terrible trials came too, for God permitted her often to be tempted and assaulted by devils, yet she always put them to flight by saying, "I trust not in myself, but in my Lord Jesus Christ."

In 1375 a good many of the cities of Italy rebelled against the Pope, and as the town of Florence was the leader, it was placed under the displeasure of the Holy Father.

Catherine heard of this, and it filled her with sorrow, because she felt sure it was only the beginning of troubles, so she wrote letters to the different cities, begging them to be faithful to the Church. But the citizens of Florence venerated Catherine so much, that they begged her to go and speak for them, to Pope Gregory XI., at Avignon. She was admitted to his presence several times, and by reminding the Holy Father of a vow he had privately made to return to Rome, she was the means, in God's hands, of bringing him back to his own city. Both Pope Gregory and Urban, who was the next Vicar of Christ, treated Catherine with great esteem. She remained there during the rest of her life, which was full of wonders and miracles, and died on the 30th of April, in the year 1380.





S. Rose of Lima.

THE Saint of Lima, whose life is a history of such great and constant penance, was born in April, 1586, and baptized in the name of Isabel, but three months later, as she was sleeping in her cradle, her mother and some friends who were in the room saw upon the baby's cheek the impression of a beautiful rose, so that ever afterwards she was called after the flower.

When Rose was old enough to know that it was not her baptismal name, she felt some disinclination to be called so, fearing that it might have been given her with a view to make her attractive, and being disturbed with this thought, she told it to our Blessed Lady one

day as she knelt in the chapel of the rosary belonging to the Dominican Friars. But the Blessed Virgin consoled her, and bade her have no more anxiety, telling her that the name of Rose was pleasing to Christ, and that as a proof of her own love, she should add to it the name of Mary. As a baby, S. Rose was unusually quiet and sweet-tempered, bearing pain in a manner which was marvellous. At only three months old her little thumb got severely pinched through a chest being shut upon it by accident, but the infant never shed a tear or uttered a cry, even though the nail came off, and the pain must have been very great. When she was old enough to walk and speak a few words, Rose seemed to have received great grace from God, for already her heart was filled with love to Him, and an extreme dread of every kind of sin.

Once she was playing with her little brother, when he threw a quantity of mud over her hair, which vexed her so much, that she was just going to leave him, but he told her, in

words quite beyond his years, that the curled ringlets worn by girls pleased the eyes of those who ought to take pleasure only in God, and Rose was so struck by what he said, that she had from that time a perfect horror of anything which could lead to vanity in herself, or admiration in others. Then she began to think of God continually ; even her sleep brought dreams of Him, and having heard how S. Catherine of Siena had as a child promised never to give her love to any but Jesus Christ, Rose at five years old copied this great example, and told our Lord she would be all His. As soon as she had made this vow, she cut off her hair, so that she might look less pleasing to others, because she only wanted to please God. Nothing can give greater joy to Jesus than to have a little innocent heart offered up entirely to Him, and He always shows His pleasure with the gift by pouring out more graces and blessings upon such a child, than upon those who only spare Him a few thoughts, and a little love ; so in return

for the generous devotion of little S. Rose, she received grace to keep the white robe of her baptism unstained by any sin. Her obedience was perfect, because she did it from the intention of pleasing God, and in imitation of the obedience of Jesus to Mary and Joseph in His life at Nazareth; and although her mother often wished her to do things which Rose felt would be contrary to the simplicity she had promised God to observe in her dress and behaviour, she begged so sweetly and humbly to be excused from what was asked her, that she managed to win her own way, and thus fulfil the duty she owed to her parents, without displeasing her Father in heaven.

One time when her mother had ordered her to wear a wreath of flowers, Rose found that she could not get excused, so she obediently wore the garland, but to prevent a vain thought creeping in, she fixed it upon her head with a large needle, which she plunged in so deeply that afterwards a surgeon had to take it out.

Another time Rose had put pieces of wood into her pillow, so as to make herself suffer a want of rest and comfort, like her Lord, but as she was told to remove them, she obeyed without a murmur; only—to be faithful to what God always asked of her—she put into the spaces such a great deal of tightly-pressed wool, that her pillow was almost as hard as a log would be. After noticing the pain and uneasiness it gave Rose to be well-dressed, and taken into company, her parents at length ceased to force her, for they were obliged to confess that such a great spirit of penance could not come from the natural heart of a child, but must be sent from God for some particular good to her soul.

In everything which did not interfere with what her conscience directed, Rose obeyed promptly and gladly. She would not even drink anything without asking leave, not only of her mother, but also putting herself under the control of their servant, who was sometimes very ill-tempered. Besides obeying

her parents, Rose was industrious in working for them with her needle, and in cultivating a little garden, from which she sold flowers as a means of gaining money to help them.

As the young Saint grew older, she was increasing in beauty, and was so intelligent and amiable, that many persons were attracted by her virtues, and wished to marry her. Instead of taking delight in her looks, Rose grieved that there was anything about her to win the love of creatures, and she tried hard to put an end to it by disfiguring herself. She washed her hands in hot lime, to take off the skin; she endeavoured to spoil her delicate complexion, and she scarcely ever went out of the house, so as to prevent people seeing her and thinking about her.

At last a very distinguished lady came to the parents of the Saint to beg that she might become the wife of her only son, and upon Rose persisting in refusing to marry, her father and mother became very angry, even striking her, and finding other means of ill-treating her, in

the hope of overcoming at last. But Rose bore it all without ever swerving from her promise to God, and as a help in these difficulties, she resolved to join a religious Order, so that all the inhabitants of Lima might know her resolve. Accordingly she received the habit of S. Dominic when she was twenty years old, choosing it first because she could still remain in her home to assist her parents, and then because God made known to her that it was His Will she should not belong to any other Order.

Now the great labour of S. Rose seems to have been to find out every possible means of humbling herself, for not only did she choose the lowest and meanest occupations, but she would cast herself at the feet of the rough, ignorant servant of the house, begging her to strike her, and treat her with contempt. When any one found fault with her, the Saint felt that she merited blame, and any misfortune which happened she received as a punishment for her sins. If she heard a word in her own praise, she would shed tears in private,

and punish herself because she thought she had given a false opinion of her character to others. Yet her life was so innocent and pure, that her confessors could scarcely find any fault worthy of absolution, and it is declared that she never committed any sin which could have destroyed the grace of God in her soul.

Those who aim at pleasing our Lord in all things, are still so unhappy as to fall into many imperfections and failings through their own weak nature, and perhaps their greatest difficulty is to keep a strict guard over their words, so that they may not speak of the mistakes of others, or do anything which could be against perfect charity. We can judge what a watch S. Rose must have kept over her heart and lips when we hear that she was never known even to speak one word louder than another, never to utter even a suspicion of any person's actions not being right, and it was commonly said of her that she was not truly a "rose," for she had no thorns.

It would take too long to mention all the

sufferings Rose heaped upon herself, the heavy loads she would carry at night and bare-footed, in memory of the still more painful carriage of the cross up Calvary, the scourgings, the fasting, the piercing crown of silver which she made for herself, with sharp points pressing always into her head, under the veil she wore. All these and many more were the penances she offered to God for her own sins, the sins of her country, and in satisfaction for the souls in purgatory, remembering in them all that the terrible pain she felt was nothing compared to that which Christ had borne upon the cross for her.

As a child, Rose had loved to be alone to pray and think of God, and as this desire increased with her age, she built herself a little hut in her father's garden, made of woven palm leaves and the branches of trees, and here she was constantly to be found. Afterwards she had a hermitage built, in which she dwelt entirely, occupied in work whenever she was not absorbed in prayer. This strange way of

life became known, and to the Saint's great grief, many persons came to see her, for they wished to hear her talk of God. Rose received at this time the miraculous power of assisting in spirit at all the Masses which were said, and the sermons that were preached in the churches of Lima, so that she could give an account of them, even though she had not moved from her hermitage.

Jesus appeared to His servant many times during her life of prayer, sometimes in the form of a child, sometimes in His manhood, and when from ill-health S. Rose had to take draughts to give her sleep, which made her heavy and drowsy in the morning, the Blessed Virgin came daily to arouse her, bidding her rise and prepare for prayer.

Rose, like all who love God very much, had a great devotion to the Blessed Sacrament, and used great care in her preparation for receiving Holy Communion. Every time she enjoyed this happiness, she was so filled with love, that the brightness of her face was ob-

served by the priest who communicated her, and many persons have declared that rays bright as the sun seemed to come from her body when she was making her thanksgiving.

Sometimes from fasting and severe penance the Saint became so weak, that she could scarcely go up to the altar, yet after the Body and Blood of her Lord had been given to her, she was perfectly revived and full of strength, so that she returned home without any difficulty, and shut herself up in her retreat without taking any food until evening. Like her especial patron, S. Catherine of Siena, S. Rose was sometimes known to pass eight whole days without any other support than what she received in the Holy Eucharist. In the year 1615 a powerful fleet from Holland came to the coast of Peru, and it was thought that a number of soldiers landed. The women and children of Lima were in tears; the men hurried to make defences; but Rose had no thought save for the Blessed Sacrament, which she dreaded to see in the power of these heretics.

With flashing eyes she begged her companions to die for the defence of their Lord. Mounting upon the altar steps of the church, she was prepared to give up her blood for Jesus in the Sacrament of His love, when news was brought that the ships had raised their anchors and sailed away. Every one rejoiced except Rose, and she was sad and silent, for she would have loved to die for Christ, and she regretted that such an opportunity had been taken from her.

The Saint had great trust in God, and always begged His help in every difficulty. It happened once that there was not a bit of bread in the house, or money to buy it, but with confidence in Him, Rose went to open the empty chest, and she found it full of loaves. Another time when her father was ill, Rose went to the church to beg God to assist her, for he owed some money which he had not the power of paying. On her return, a stranger came to her home, and gave her father a little purse containing the exact sum he needed. Thus,

and in many other ways, Almighty God rewarded the Saint for her trust in Him.

When Rose had reached her thirty-first year, she learned by a revelation from heaven that she would die upon the Feast of S. Bartholomew. She heard, too, that she must endure extreme suffering, each part of her body being in violent pain, and yet she never trembled or shrank from the thought; she rejoiced that she might have a share in the cross and suffering of Christ.

On the 1st of August she was in health, but at midnight she was heard crying and groaning piteously, and from then to the 24th of August, when she died, she endured terrible agony; but her mind was calm and peaceful, and she begged that her pains might even be increased in punishment of the sins of which she believed herself guilty. She confessed daily during that illness, and when the Blessed Sacrament was brought to her, her face became bright with joy, and she remained quite motionless and rapt in God. When she felt her last moment

approaching, the Saint begged her brother to move the bolster from beneath her head, and to put pieces of wood instead of it, which he did, and after thanking him, she said twice, "Jesus be with me! Jesus be with me!" and then her innocent soul went home to God.





S. Ignatius.

AT the old Castle of Loyola, a little child was born in the year 1491, who received in baptism the name of Inigo which he afterwards changed for that of Ignatius. Ours is not a history of a saintly childhood and the wondrous holiness of very early years, for this boy was gay and brilliant amongst the young pages of the court of Ferdinand; and though we hear that he never gave himself to gambling and other such amusements, it seems as if his highest ambition was fixed on deeds of courage, whilst his favourite occupation was the reading of tales of romance and chivalry.

At about the age of twenty-six years, he

began to carry arms, and was brave in the defence of his country and his king; but in one contest when Ignatius was fighting courageously, wishing to die rather than retreat, a cannon-ball broke the bone of his right leg, and he fell to the ground, and the French became masters of the citadel, making him their prisoner. But his bravery had so won their admiration that they treated him with great courtesy, and, as his wound needed much care, he received permission to go to his own country, where he was conveyed on a litter. The surgeons declared that a terrible operation must take place, to which Ignatius consented willingly, and bore it without allowing any signs of pain to escape him, but his health grew worse afterwards, and he became very ill from fever. The night before the Feast of SS. Peter and Paul, the doctors considered his life in great danger; he had received the last Sacraments in preparation for death, and few had any hope of his recovery, but, at midnight, Ignatius had a vision of S. Peter, to whom he

had always a particular devotion, promising him that he should recover his health. From that moment a change begun, the fever subsided, and his wound slowly healed, but it was found that through the unskilful operation he had borne, one leg was shorter than the other, and he would never be able to walk without showing this disfigurement. Ignatius inquired if there was no remedy possible, and, when he was told that the only thing would be for the bone to be cut away with a saw, he allowed it to be done, never even shrinking during the pain; but all was in vain, there was no cure for the lameness, and the brave young soldier knew that his dreams of victory and honour were over.

As he lay on his sick-bed, Ignatius called for books to pass away the weary hours; he had always loved to read of the gallant deeds of high-born knights and cavaliers, and his thoughts returned to them now in his weakness, but they had not the tales he loved in the old Castle of Loyola, and as none were to

Stories of the Saints.

be found, they carried him the Lives of the Saints. It was indeed a happy thing for him—it was God's time for speaking to his heart, calling him to rise from his dreams of enterprise and romance and turn his energy and zeal against the enemies of his soul so that he might fight against the world, the flesh, and the devil, as a good, true soldier of Jesus Christ.

On that bed of weakness, during the silent nights and weary days of pain, Ignatius thought over his life—those worldly hopes and longings which had been like a cloud between him and his God, and he made his choice of a different future. Yes, it should be all changed now, he would take up the battle against sin, he would fight for the kingdom of God, and live to be what his Lord would have him.

One night when he was praying before an image of the Blessed Virgin—offering himself through her to God—a sudden shock like an earthquake seemed to shake the house and the

room he was in, so that the frames of the windows were broken. Another time, Mary herself appeared to him with the Divine Child in her arms and remained speaking with him until his heart was full of peace and sweetness. This made Ignatius more anxious to obey the call of God and begin a different life, and, as soon as he was able to take the journey, he told his brother of his purpose of leaving Loyola.

After bidding farewell to his family and starting towards Mont Serrat, he obtained a pilgrim's dress with a cord for a girdle and hempen shoes, together with a staff and shell, and strapping them upon his mule, he rode slowly along the rocky path to a church and place of pilgrimage, where he made a general confession of his whole life, and sought advice as to his future.

Three days Ignatius remained at Mont Serrat, and then, leaving his mule for the use of the monastery, and suspending his sword and dagger by the altar of the Blessed Virgin, he

went slowly and painfully along his way to Manresa, where he desired to live unknown and uncared for, doing penance for the sins and follies of the past. He set apart seven hours every day for prayer, he allowed scarce any time for sleep, lying on the ground with a stone or piece of wood for his pillow. Three times a day he scourged himself severely, and took for his food hard and blackened crusts, or vegetables sprinkled with ashes. Once Ignatius had loved and sought for admiration and esteem, now he put it far from him, and when the children mocked him and shouted, "Here comes the man in sackcloth," he bore it not only patiently but with joy.

For some months, he attended upon the sick at the hospital at Manresa, conquering all the natural dislike he had for the terrible complaints and vulgar habits of the people he found there; but afterwards he sought a more solitary life, and made his abode in a cavern not far off, where he increased his prayers and penances. Terrible temptations from the devil

beset him there, in which he called upon God to deliver him; but other visions came of heavenly sweetness for his relief, and thus ten months passed by. Then God pointed out to him a work to do among men. He called upon him to leave his retirement by putting upon his heart that burning love for souls which gave him the spirit of an Apostle. From that moment one thought was in the mind of Ignatius—he must go forth into the world to make known the love of God to men; so he left his cavern home, and changing his hermit dress for a shorter garment of coarse gray cloth, journeyed to Barcelona, where he remained some twenty days, begging his daily bread, and visiting the hospitals and prisons. His desire was to sail for Italy, and, having obtained a free passage, he went on board the vessel, first laying on a stone five or six pieces of money which had been given him, so that he might faithfully keep his resolution of perfect poverty. Landed at the port of Gaieta, he travelled on foot to Rome, where he obtained the blessing of the

Pope, but only remained a few days, as his aim was to reach Jerusalem and visit the spots made sacred by the human life of Christ.

It was not only a pilgrimage he was making; Ignatius wished also to bring together a company of men to teach the truths of the Catholic Church, but the Franciscan Fathers already there thought it would not be wise to remain, and, submitting to their opinion, he arranged to leave Jerusalem, and, after many difficulties, sailed for Italy, passing on to Spain.

Once more at Barcelona, Ignatius returned to a life of great penance and prayer, and God gave him many graces and signs of His love. During his stay in that city, three young men came to Ignatius, wishing to follow him, and belong to the Order he intended to found, and thus began the Society of Jesus, which is now known in every part of the Christian world. Their special work has always been to do good to souls, and from the first, S. Ignatius was very successful in winning people to love and

serve God. From place to place he travelled preaching the crucified Saviour, adding to his Society, teaching the Christian doctrine—like Jesus, his master, he was misjudged, wrongfully accused, and even imprisoned, but God's blessing was with him, and every difficulty only brought more success.

Thus Ignatius lived until the year 1554, when his health began to be very weak, so that he was obliged to have help in the great work of governing his society; but early in the summer of 1556 his illness grew so much worse, that he himself felt very sure he should not live long. On the 31st of July he died almost suddenly, for although he was very feeble, no one expected that he would be gone so soon, and his soul passed to God with the greatest peace and calmness, nothing unusual happening at that time. It is thought that, in his deep humility, he may have sought this as a favour from God, for he had always tried to conceal the special gifts he received, but we know he *did* pray that the Society of Jesus

might be especially hated by the world, as their Master was, and this prayer has been granted.

Those who hate the true faith, hate above all the Jesuits, and their name alone is used as a reproach ; in almost every land they have been allowed to shed their blood as martyrs for the truth, and from many countries they have been turned away, for teaching men to know God, and repent of their sins against Him ; but through all they have pursued their way, doing their works of mercy without seeking any reward on earth, taking as their standard the Cross of Jesus, and for their motto "To the greater glory of God." *This*, then, has been the work of the once brave young Spanish soldier, who became a far braver and nobler soldier of the Lord Jesus Christ ; *this* was the fulfilment of the purposes he formed upon his sick-bed, when he promised his life, and strength, and all that he had to be given to the love and service of God.



S. Aloysius.

THAS always pleased Almighty God to raise up saints for some special purpose—either to be our example of holiness in the world or in the cloister, sometimes models of penance or of prayer; but each one has had a distinct and clear vocation, which is to be the means of usefulness to others, for whose good their virtues are made fully known, when they have passed from this life to the life of heaven.

In this way, it seems as if Louis Gonzaga, afterwards called Aloysius, was to be a special example of holiness to children and youths, for his short life of twenty-three years was full of piety and sweetness from his birth. His good

mother greatly desired to have a son, and she prayed earnestly that it might be God's Will that this happiness should be given her, promising that her first child should be put, in a special way, under the protection of the Blessed Virgin, and on the 9th March, 1568, the little Louis came into the world to her very great joy. On the day of his baptism the whole town was arrayed for a feast, guns fired in honour of the baby prince, who came of such a noble family, and bright flowers strewn along the road from the castle to the church, where he was to be made a child of God. Money was thrown freely amongst the crowd, who shouted "Long life to the Prince! May he be happy above all!" and there was merriment and grandeur in the Italian city, whilst the angels in heaven were filled with joy because a soul had been created to bring God such glory. Even during the first few weeks of his life, this little infant was observed to have so unusually sweet an expression on his face, that the person who nursed him, often said she felt as if she was

holding a little angel from heaven in her arms, rather than an earthly child. Every day his mother made the sacred sign of the cross with his own little hand, repeating to him the Names of Jesus and Mary, and therefore she had the joy of hearing them lisped as his first words. He quickly learned the Our Father and Hail Mary with his baby tongue, and as soon as he could toddle about, would hide himself behind some curtains or pieces of furniture, where he was found with his hands folded in prayer. Marta, his mother, rejoiced to see this promise of holiness in her little son, but the Marquis would gladly have had him more spirited and boisterous ; so before Louis was four years old, he took him out of the hands of his nurses, and put him under a tutor who he thought would better train the child to keep up the honour and dignity of his noble family. Just at this time the Christian countries of Europe had been gaining great victories over the infidels, and a fresh body of men had been gathered together under the

command of the Marquis, who were to be given a month's training in Casal, to prepare them for war.

It seemed to the father such a good opportunity for giving little Louis a military taste, that he determined, in spite of his mother's fear, to take him there. So the boy of four years was clothed in the dress of a soldier, with helmet and plume, sword, belt, and powder-flask, and then led to bid his mother farewell.

Louis was a great favourite in the camp, and showed so much skill and sense that even his father was satisfied; once, however, when discharging his firearm, the powder exploded in his face, so, although his skin only was slightly injured, he was not allowed to have it about him any more. But it would seem that the baby-soldier had a little desire to exhibit his courage to the rest, for, after this, he crept away unnoticed one day to the camp, and loaded and discharged a little cannon which he found there. The soldiers, who had been taking

their rest, started in alarm to their feet. Even the Marquis was anxious as to the cause of the explosion, and sent to discover what had happened, declaring that he would punish the offender, little supposing it to be his own Louis. When his messenger informed the Marquis what the child had done, he tried to look very severe and still threatened punishment for the offence, but when every voice called out, "Pardon, pardon, for the little prince!" he was quickly forgiven and more admired for his courage than before. In after years, the Saint said he felt sure that but for the special protection of God, he must have been instantly killed then, and he reproached himself keenly for having stolen the powder from one of the men so as to accomplish his scheme unknown to them.

But the end of the month came, the Marquis set forth with his troops, and Louis was sent home to his mother under the charge of his tutor and servants. As they journeyed, it was noticed that he had learned some bad words

from the soldiers which he made use of without understanding, and the tutor reproved him for doing so, telling him what pain and sorrow it would be to his mother if she heard him. Louis cried bitterly, promising never to speak so again, and he faithfully kept his word, nor could he ever hear an improper expression fall from the lips of others without showing the greatest distress.

This sin, done so childishly and ignorantly, was the great offence of his life in the confessions of later years, and so pure was his heart that four different priests, who were aware of all that had passed in his soul from his earliest days, have felt sure that he never lost the grace of his baptism.

At seven years old, when it was explained to him that he had reached the age of reason, he set himself to begin afresh to please God, and to practise in trifling ways that love of penance which grew up with him. He would repeat the Penitential Psalms and other devotions every day upon his knees, refusing to

use the cushions which, like the rest of the family, he had always knelt upon before. Two years later, he was left in the city of Florence until he was eleven years old, and during that time he was most diligent in his studies, most obedient in performing every duty as a work done for God. On festival days, he was taken to pay a visit to the Grand-Duke, but then he would try to get quietly away from the noisy party of children to amuse himself in making little altars or in speaking of heavenly things. Yet, by doing so, he did not make himself unattractive to his companions, indeed, they all loved him for his great gentleness and patience, and many tried to turn from evil habits in imitation of Louis Gonzaga.

At this time, the little boy began to think a great deal about the roots of those faults he perceived in himself; he had always been very sorry for the least offence, confessing it with tears for having grieved the good God, but now that he was older, he set to work to find and destroy the very beginning of every imperfect

feeling in his soul, and thus his meekness and humility became wonderful. Many lads of his age forget the kindness and respect due to those who serve and attend them, but Louis would ask for what he needed as humbly and sweetly as if he had been begging a favour from a superior. He was equally careful that no want of charity should be in his heart or upon his lips, and finding it so difficult to avoid seeing the mistakes and failings of other people, he tried to retire from them as much as was possible to do unobserved, so that he might avoid the slightest temptation to fall even into trifling faults of this kind.

There was a church in the city of Florence where this saintly boy loved especially to pray, and here his great reverence for the Blessed Virgin increased daily, until he felt as if he knew not how to prove his devotion to her. In this church there was a miraculous picture of the Blessed Virgin, and one day it struck Louis, as he knelt before it, that his dear Mother Mary would be pleased if he gave her the promise never to

love any human creature, or bind himself by any tie to this life, keeping all his affection for her and for God. So at the feet of his favourite picture, the boy of ten years made this offering to *Mary Immaculate*, who obtained for him the grace of perfect purity in thought and action until his death, as a reward for his generous love.

It was not long after, that Louis fell into a state of ill-health which could only be cured by abstinence from many agreeable kinds of food, and this so accustomed him to deny his appetite that after he was well, he kept the strictest rule over himself with regard to what he ate and drank, scarcely taking sufficient to support his life. In this respect, Louis certainly obeyed a special inspiration of God such as is rarely given to children ; but though it would be wrong for those who are very young to decide for themselves too fast as this Saint did, his abstinence may teach a lesson to those who are fanciful about their food, and indulge themselves in so many things which are not needed for their health and strength.

This life of regular study, prayer, and solitude, in the city of Florence, gave Louis so strong a desire to keep himself from the society of the world as he grew older, that he resolved to give up all the wealth and grandeur which, as the eldest son of a noble family, were his own, and let his younger brother Ridolfo take his place, but being still so young he did not talk of these plans, keeping them secretly in his heart until the proper time should come for making them known.

When the Marquis sent for his boys to return home, Marta clasped her first-born child in her arms with the greatest joy, but she saw that the bloom of health had left his face, and he looked slight and delicate, yet she could not grieve, because the mark of his purity of soul seemed to appear upon his face, and that was more precious in her eyes than the round fresh cheek and sturdy form which he had three years before.

On reaching home Louis did not lessen his time for prayer, on the contrary, he was

more and more given to it, kneeling for a length of time motionless before his crucifix, with tears flowing fast, because he felt so unworthy of God's great mercy and love. On festivals he would go and teach poor children the Christian doctrine, but with such modesty and sweetness, that even older persons liked to listen to the instructions and advice he gave. Thus Louis's daily life passed on until the time approached for his First Communion, and we may partly imagine with what burning love and deep humility he desired the day when he should receive his Lord within his breast.

The great S. Charles Borromeo came to stay near the house of the Gonzagas just then, and amongst the crowd of people who listened to his preaching, he noticed this little boy, with the light of a lovely soul shining upon his face, and spent a good deal of time in talking with him, and it was from his hands that the young Saint received the Body and Blood of Jesus for the first time.

After that day his love for the Blessed Sacrament became more and more intense ; he advanced rapidly in holiness, and with all he preserved the same humble sorrow for sins which were so slight that his confessors were astonished at the immense grace God poured out upon him, in keeping him so pure and spotless. The purpose which had once sprung up in the heart of Louis to renounce the world, and his noble position in it, was growing stronger now, and as he prayed, God showed him clearly that his place must be in religion, so although he was too young to carry out this desire, he felt that he must begin to lead some such life at home as he hoped to follow in later years. Every comfort which he could give up without making much show of it, was put away from him now—there should be no more fires in his room, for religious had none in their cells, and though his bed could not be changed unobserved, he made it hard with pieces of wood and other things. At his meals he would choose the food he liked least,

or which was the least rare, and in the middle of the cold nights of winter, he would rise to prayer, and become so full of love and devotion, that he scarcely knew his body was chilled and shivering from the exposure.

A change came in the outward life of the Saint then, for his parents went to join the court of Spain, by the King's invitation, and Louis with his younger brother and sister accompanied them. During the voyage, they landed at some of the ports on the way, and at one of them Louis, who was wandering on the beach, picked up a stone of a blood-red tint, which appeared to him to represent the five wounds of Jesus, and which he considered God had put in his way on purpose to give him a greater devotion to the Passion of our Lord. After that, he was more than ever resolved upon giving his life entirely to God in a religious house, and during his stay in the Spanish court, he saw a good deal of the Fathers of the Society of Jesus, which led him to desire to become one of them. His mother had long

been told of his hopes and wishes, but both of them knew that the Marquis would be very angry even at the idea of his eldest son giving up his place in the world, and that it would be almost impossible to gain his consent.

Louis prayed and did penance, and at length he received such a clear knowledge of God's Will, that he had no more doubt as to what he ought to do, and he at once spoke to his confessor, begging him to ask the Jesuit Fathers to receive him. Hard and difficult as his way would be in gaining his desire, the Saint was never one who would shrink back from what cost him any suffering, and the same day he told his mother all, and obtained her promise to mention the subject to his father. The Marquis was furious with anger, but deciding to treat it as a boyish folly, he did not speak to Louis for a few days, therefore the youth himself sought an interview, in which he told his father, humbly but firmly, of his resolution to obey the voice of God. His words were received with most violent reproaches ; his father drove

him from his presence, threatening to have him caned by his servants, but Louis only replied : " Would that God allowed me to suffer such treatment for the love of Him!" and went away with perfect meekness.

The Marquis could not long be angry with his son, so he turned his displeasure upon his confessor, and next he accused the Fathers of the Society of trying to rob him of Louis ; then he arranged to return with his family to their own home in Italy. It was a great disappointment to the Saint, but he obeyed his father, and prepared for the journey, during which he was to visit several of the Italian courts, and be thrown amongst the world he had renounced. Once back at Castiglione, Louis found a cave upon his father's estate, where he might enjoy the peace and retirement for which he longed, and to this place he had his bed and books removed, and gave himself up to prayer and penance, but the Marquis heard of this retreat, and ordered him to remain in his own room, with many harsh words and

angry threats. Louis obeyed ; and closing the door, knelt before the crucifix, shedding many tears, and begged God to appear for him, whilst his father's conscience began to accuse him of his severity to so holy a son. So he sent an attendant to see what the lad was about, who beheld through a crack in the door his young master weeping before the image of his crucified Master, whilst he scourged himself severely. The man burst into tears, and returned to tell the Marquis what he had seen, and he insisted on being taken from his bed, where he was confined by illness, and placed in a large arm-chair, which was wheeled to the door of his son's room. There he also heard the cruel blows which Louis was inflicting on himself—his heart melted, and causing the chair to be pushed into the room, he exclaimed : “ My son, you have conquered at last.” It was true that the Saint's patience and suffering had won the victory, but there were still to be more trials and more difficulties before he could brave the world. The consent of the Emperor

had to be gained to his giving up his property to Ridolfo ; his father was to try his courage by appealing to his loving nature as a means of getting him to renounce the thought of a religious life, but Louis prayed on that God would remove all hindrances from his path, and at length, after long delay, the Marquis consented to part with him, and bid him go with his blessing, to the life to which God called him. The news soon spread through the castle and through the town ; men, women, and children mourned to lose their young lord, and begged him not to forsake them, but Louis remained firm in his desire to give up the world for the service of God, and lost no time in taking leave of his home and friends, to present himself in Rome to the General of the Company of Jesus.

It was on the Feast of the Presentation of our Lady, that Louis—now Brother Aloysius—offered his soul to the entire service of God, and was received as a son by the new Father he had chosen, and on the 25th of November

he entered the house as a novice, when he renewed again the promise he had so often made to God, asking for grace to live and die in the Society he had chosen. The Saint always kept that anniversary with great devotion, choosing S. Catherine as his special patron, on account of her festival being celebrated on that day. Now we see Aloysius in the state he had longed for, doing every duty with cheerful joy, obeying his master with never-failing sweetness and humility, practising the rules of his Order with great exactness, and thus he passed through his two years' trial as a perfect novice, and was allowed to make his profession.

He had always loved humility, but now he sought humiliations with increasing eagerness, and delighted in being sent out to beg, with a sack on his shoulders, through the streets of Rome, to wash plates and dishes in the kitchen, and collect scraps to give to the poor who waited at the door. It was not unusual for the members of the Society to do such things, but they were striking in Aloysius, because of

the delight which was seen upon his face when he performed them. But his health became more delicate, and God, Who had made him holy in his youth, was quickly preparing him for the glory of heaven. In the year 1591 a terrible fever raged throughout Italy, and in Rome the deaths were so many, that the Jesuits opened an hospital of their own, and the General himself attended upon the sick. Aloysius was one of the foremost in his charity to the fever-stricken poor, undressing and placing them in bed, washing them, and bringing them food with the greatest readiness. Several of his companions died, yet the infection did not seem to touch the Saint, but later he caught the terrible complaint through carrying a poor creature whom he found in the street to the hospital. On the seventh day of his illness his end seemed so near, that he received the last Sacraments, but he lived still a few weeks longer, to die not so much from the fever as the exhaustion which came after it. During his sickness his love of penance still appeared

strong; he would sip his bitter medicine slowly, so as to mortify himself more, and by trifling sacrifices proved how great a perfection he had reached.

In spite of his weakness, he would ask for his clothes, and drag himself, to a table on which a crucifix was standing, which he would take in his hands and kiss reverently, also the picture of S. Catherine, which was hanging on the wall. Once in prayer it was made known to Aloysius the exact day upon which he should die, and he was full of joy, because he longed so much to be with God. "Have you heard the good news?" he said to one of the Fathers. "I am to die in a week's time. Pray say the *Te Deum* with me in thanksgiving to God."

During the few days which yet remained, he asked that a crucifix might be placed on a table near his bed, whilst the seven Penitential Psalms were read to him; or else he would beg to hear some passages from his favourite spiritual books. He spoke of his death as

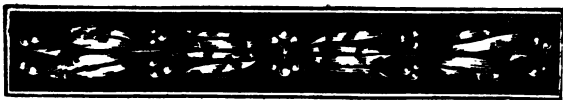
simply as people speak of going out of their dwelling, and often said softly to himself, "I desire to be dissolved and to be with Christ," whilst his only pain seemed to be lest the food he was ordered to take might delay the time he longed for so much.

On the last day of the Octave of Corpus Christi, when he had said he should die, the brothers who nursed him thought him better and stronger than usual, but Aloysius replied smilingly, "I shall die to-day." He begged to receive the Body and Blood of his Lord as Viaticum, but the Infirmarian could not believe it was necessary; however, as the afternoon passed, he begged so earnestly for this grace, that the Father Rector brought it to him in the presence of all the company. Then the saintly youth took leave of all in turn, whilst they wept bitterly at the thought of losing him. When the room was quiet again, Aloysius seemed to remain in continual prayer, the Fathers giving him from time to time holy water, or a crucifix to kiss, as he murmured the Name of Jesus.

At last with his eyes fixed on the image of the dying Saviour, and a blessed candle in his hand, he yielded up his spirit into the hands of the God he had loved and served so faithfully, in the middle of the night between the 20th and 21st of June, thus gaining the favour he had long desired, of dying within the Octave of Corpus Christi, and upon a Friday. When the news spread, no one thought of the pure soul without the certainty that it was in heaven. Everything that could be obtained was taken for a precious relic, and after the body was removed to the church of the Annunziata, many of the students knelt praying every day around his tomb. Although Aloysius had striven to hide himself from the knowledge of the world, it was God's Will that his wonderful sanctity should be made known to men, so that he may stand as a model of purity and perfection for every child of the Holy Catholic Church. We may not be asked to take up the practices of Aloysius—such marvellous gifts of grace will probably never be ours—still each in our own

path is called to aim high, to strive for the humility, purity, and charity which this young Saint put before himself as the virtues which shone so brightly in Jesus and Mary, so that we, too, may enjoy the possession of God in heaven, and receive an unfading crown.





S. Stanislaus Kostka.

JOHN and MARGARET KOSTKA were rich and noble, and dwelt with their four children upon the domain in Poland which had belonged to their family for centuries, when the coming birth of the little Stanislaus was known to them. The mother thought much about the child God was about to give her, and one night in a dream it seemed to her that there was a strange mark upon her breast, which, on looking closer, she found to be the holy Name of Jesus in letters of purple surrounded by golden rays. She awoke with a feeling of great gladness but thought little more of her dream, until some days later this Name of Jesus was really im-

printed upon her exactly as it had appeared during her sleep. At first she was afraid and troubled, but when she grew calmer she began to think that by this sign God intended her to know that the little one whose birth she was expecting was some soul very dear to Him—an angel from heaven who should bring her great joy. She sought her confessor to tell him what had happened and to ask him the meaning of it, and, after consulting God in prayer, the holy priest told her that the sacred Name had been imprinted by a heavenly hand to announce the future sanctity of the child who would be given her, and he bid her rejoice rather than fear, and strive to make herself worthy to receive such a great blessing from God.

On the 28th October, 1550, a little son was born in the castle, who was baptized as soon as possible in the presence of all the noble Polish families who lived near, receiving the name of Stanislaus. When the ceremony was over, his godfather took him in his arms and laid him

down before the altar of the Blessed Sacrament, inspired, no doubt, by the Holy Ghost, whilst he himself knelt by and prayed the Almighty to make this little infant entirely His own; then, rising, he took up the child in his arms, and all the company returned to the castle to celebrate the day with great rejoicing.

The parents of Stanislaus, knowing that he was not an ordinary child, began to pray very earnestly that they might be guided to bring him up according to the holy Will of God, but it seemed, from the first, as if the little Stanislaus was taught directly from above, for when he was old enough to understand what was said to him about Jesus and His Blessed Mother, he already knew their names, and loved them above everything. It was this grace bestowed upon him of knowing and loving God as soon as he could think and speak which, no doubt, made the life of Stanislaus so very holy as he grew up.

At four years old, the careful parents found

for their little son a tutor who was both intelligent and wise, and, under his teaching, Stanislaus advanced rapidly in study, and was a most obedient and gentle pupil. At five or six years of age, this holy child would go and hide in some unused room, and, kneeling down, join his little hands and pray with tears streaming from his eyes, but they were happy tears, shed at the thought of the tenderness and love of God. The servants, passing to and fro, often saw him so wrapt in prayer that he was quite unconscious of any noise they might make around him, but they were silent about such things, fearing to interfere with one who was so very near to God. The child seemed unable to pass an instant without prayer, finding his Heavenly Father ready to hear him in all times and places, but when he was forced to join in conversation, he spoke with the sweetness of a little angel about heavenly things, and when the name of the Blessed Virgin was mentioned, his face lit up with an unearthly joy.

Many visitors came to the castle, and it occasionally happened that some word contrary to perfect purity might escape the lips of those who were at the table; then little Stanislaus trembled and turned pale with dread, and his eyes were raised to heaven with an expression of the greatest distress.

We may imagine the happiness which the parents of Stanislaus felt in watching the growth of body and the increasing saintliness of their little son, but they resolved upon bearing the pain of a separation from him when he was in his fourteenth year, that he might go to the Jesuit College at Vienna to finish his studies. His elder brother Paul was to accompany him besides his tutor and three servants, and they left the castle in the year 1564, arriving safely at Vienna, where the Fathers who directed the college received them with great kindness. The first thought of Stanislaus was as to who he might find best suited to take care of his soul, and, after asking God's guidance, he met with one to whom

he could open his heart with confidence. His new companions were astonished to see this holy youth before the Blessed Sacrament, his face beaming with a radiance they had never witnessed before, his soul poured out before his Lord and all earthly things forgotten; and the Fathers said, "We have in our seminary an angel under the form of Stanislaus."

Frequently he was quite forgetful of the time which was passing and knelt on until he fell exhausted upon the ground, which roused him to consciousness of things around, and made him grieve that his human weakness should thus hinder his union with God.

In the college there was an association under the protection of the Blessed Virgin, of which S. Barbara was the second patron, and Stanislaus wished very much to be admitted into the number, to the great delight of his fellow-students, who gladly received him, and the piety of the association received new strength and freshness from his presence and words.

But this happiness was coming to an end,

for during the same year Stanislaus had entered the college, the Emperor Ferdinand died, and his son Maximilian who succeeded him would no longer allow the Jesuit Fathers to have pupils in Vienna. Some of the students returned to their homes, others remained to continue their course of reading in other houses, but Stanislaus was overcome with grief—to him the college had been a most happy place, for there he had found all his soul desired. His young companions were greatly distressed at parting with him, and each one kept the memory of his loving, holy words and ways long after.

Paul Kostka and the tutor Bilinski whom they had taken with them, decided upon staying in Vienna, and Stanislaus tried to persuade his brother to select some quiet house where they could live retired and pursue their studies.

But Paul loved luxury and society, and insisted on having fine apartments to which he could invite his friends, so that poor Stanis-

laus was obliged to yield to his wishes ; when he found himself under the roof of a heretic, which seemed to him a terrible misfortune, he only resolved to live more closely in union with God, and bore his grief with great sweetness and patience. His one happiness was to take refuge in the church of the Jesuit Fathers for prayer, where, when sought for after a long absence, he was found lying on the ground with his arms extended in the form of a cross, quite lost to consciousness. To revive him, they would speak and raise him to his feet, and when at last his eyes opened, he would smile and say, "Do not be alarmed ; it is nothing ; I am not ill."

It would be hard to describe the joy with which every Sunday and festival he received the Holy Eucharist, all his thoughts being lost in God and His great love, so that hearing one Mass would not satisfy him, for he remained to two or three, and then could scarcely bear to leave the Church. As soon as his recreation time came, he would hurry to spend a few moments

before the Blessed Sacrament, and then return to his studies with a bright happy face.

During the night, Stanislaus gave as short a time as possible to sleep, rising always at midnight to pray, with his arms held out in the form of a cross; he would also scourge himself severely, and yet these penances never made him sad or melancholy, on the contrary, he was particularly gay and joyous in face and manner.

The elder Kostka, seeing his brother's wonderful devotion, began to ridicule and persecute him. College life had made *him* worldly and luxurious, and Bilinski, the governor of the two youths, had unfortunately become the same, quite different in every way to Stanislaus, whom they tried vainly to force into their own manner of living. Finding it impossible to turn him aside from spiritual things, Paul forgot himself so far as to begin to treat his brother with roughness, throwing him on the ground, and even striking him with a stick, in which he was joined by two young Polish noblemen, who lived with them.

This cruelty went on for two entire years, during which Stanislaus never murmured at their treatment. Afterwards, when Paul had repented of these things, and entered upon a new life, the memory of his brother's angelic patience would bring tears of sorrow to his eyes. About this time it happened that after spending his usual time in prayer, Stanislaus had retired to bed, placing a lighted candle close by, that he might continue reading. But he dropped asleep, the candle fell upon the bed, and set it on fire, the smell of which awoke one of the household who slept in the same room, and looking towards the place where Stanislaus was lying, saw that he was surrounded by flames. His cries awoke the Saint, who rose from his bed, and it was found that although all its coverings were destroyed, the fire had not been allowed even to singe a hair upon the head of Stanislaus. In this way God showed that this holy youth was especially under His care.

During the time he lived in this place, he

became seriously ill, so that he believed himself near death, and was distressed that in that house of heresy, where a Catholic priest would not be suffered to enter, he could not hope to receive Viaticum, so he turned for help to the saints in heaven. S. Barbara had always been the object of his special devotions, and reading that she had the power of obtaining for those who loved her, the grace of not dying without receiving Holy Communion, he besought her earnestly to assist him. In answer to his prayer, S. Barbara appeared in the sick-room, accompanied by two angels, who bore with them the Holy Eucharist, and in spite of his weakness, Stanislaus knelt down by his bed-side, and exclaiming three times "Domine non sum dignus," received the Body and Blood of Christ with great joy, and lay down again peacefully, whilst the saint and the angels disappeared to heaven.

Still the illness increased, Stanislaus appeared to be dying, and those around his bed were watching him in great sorrow, for

they grieved now that they had treated him with such unkindness. The doctors said they could do no more, his agony began, and yet God's Will was to spare him longer ; to let him suffer still upon earth, before entering into the blessedness of heaven—to have him brought back from the brink of death by the Blessed Virgin herself.

Just as he seemed about to draw his last breath, a sudden and most brilliant light filled the room, in the midst of which stood Mary with the Divine Child in her arms, Whom she placed upon the bed. Stanislaus kissing and embracing his infant Lord with reverent love, took Him in his arms, pressing Him closely to his heart, whilst the Blessed Virgin spoke, saying that he should recover, but that the life she had obtained for him, must be given to the service of God, as a member of the Society of Jesus. Having said this, Mary took the Holy Child in her arms, blessed Stanislaus, and, with a look of great tenderness, disappeared, leaving him perfectly cured.

When the Saint had made his thanksgiving in the church of the Jesuit Fathers for the favours granted to him, he went to his confessor and told his vision, but although the priest was much impressed by what he heard, he saw the difficulties which were in the way of Stanislaus carrying out the wishes of his Blessed Mother, as it would be impossible, in Vienna, to receive him into the Society of Jesus without the consent of his parents. Stanislaus prayed by night and day, vowing his life once more to God, and adding to it his willingness to visit every college in every country, if he might at last gain admittance to the company he loved. God answered his prayers by bringing him into the society of an Italian Father, to whom he made known all the affairs of his soul, and who, after much thought, advised him to leave Vienna for some other part.

Stanislaus knew that he had not means to take a long journey, but he was not afraid of trusting God to grant him alms on his

way; he was ready to put on the meanest clothing, and bear any want, if only he might live and die in the Society of Jesus, so he prepared a dress and hat such as were worn by the poorest pilgrims. A few days later, Paul came to his room and began reproaching him, seizing him by his hair and striking him savagely, during which Stanislaus never complained. But as soon as the cruel brother loosed his hold, he said to him, "If you continue to treat me thus, I shall be obliged to free myself. You have forced me to live here against my will, and you will have to account to my father for what you have done."

Paul, who during the two years he had ill-treated his brother had never witnessed a sign of his feeling, was surprised by his firm tone, and in a fit of rage exclaimed, "Go and hang yourself, if you will; so long as you are out of my sight, I care not what may happen to you." Stanislaus could scarcely hide the joy with which he heard these words, and hastened to the Father to tell him what had happened,

and arrange for his departure, who bid him come, after Mass the next morning, for two letters with which to start upon his journey.

That night Stanislaus put all in order, made a parcel of his poor beggar's garments, and began his prayer which lasted until the dawn of day, when he rose, and begging anew the protection of Jesus and Mary, left his room whilst his brother was yet sleeping. Calling a servant to him, he said, "Tell Paul when he rises that I am not likely to return to breakfast, for I have received an invitation which I feel obliged to accept," and so set forth for the house of the Jesuit Fathers.

After assisting at Mass and receiving Holy Communion, Stanislaus sought the Père Antoine to ask his blessing, and having obtained from him a letter to a Father of the Society in Augsburg, and one to a Father in Rome, he left the city, and when he had walked some distance, turned aside into a retired spot, to take off his own clothing, and assume the poor dress he had with him.

With childlike joy he put on a cord for girdle, to which he fastened his rosary, and then placing a shabby hat upon his head, which he had found much difficulty in getting, he walked onwards until he met a beggar, to whom he gave the clothing he had worn in the world.

When Paul Kostka received his brother's message, and heard that he had gone out in his best clothes, he was very much astonished, but he never suspected what had really happened. Yet, as the day passed, and evening drew on, both he and Bilinski became uneasy, and sent servants to search for him in all directions. They went to the house of the Jesuit Fathers, but could hear nothing of Stanislaus, upon which Paul himself went to the college, insisting upon every part of it being searched, that he might discover his brother. But when they assured him that Stanislaus was not there, that he was not even in Vienna, and they believed him to have departed secretly, Paul remembered his own

words, the last angry words he had spoken to Stanislaus, and he began to fear the displeasure of his father, when he should learn that cruelty and ill-treatment had driven his youngest son away. After a great many inquiries, news was brought that Stanislaus had taken the road to Augsburg, and then Paul Kostka and Bilinski started in pursuit of him as soon as morning came. During the night the Saint had been engaged in prayer, and as the day broke, he left the house where he had been charitably received, refusing any food, so that he might be able to receive Holy Communion if he came to some church in his way.

Having walked on all the morning, addressing prayers to the Blessed Virgin, he began to meditate upon his favourite *Salve Regina*, when he heard the noise of a carriage approaching, and turning his head, recognized his brother Paul.

For an instant he raised his eyes to heaven, begging help of his Blessed Mother, and continued walking quietly on, not seeing

any place where he could hide himself. But just as the carriage drew close, he perceived a little stream into which he stepped to prevent his brother seeing his face, and reached the opposite side unnoticed. Although Paul and Bilinski had seen the figure of the beggar before them on the road, they never thought of it being the fugitive, until later, when they turned back to find out if it really was he. But coming to the edge of the stream over which Stanislaus had passed, the horses refused to move, neither blows nor coaxing would induce them to stir, and when the driver loosened the reins in despair, they turned round and galloped furiously towards Vienna, which they reached in a very short time. When Paul arrived at home a letter was found there, left by Stanislaus for Bilinski, in which he gave the reason of his departure for Vienna, desiring them to let his father know that it was God's Will he should enter the Society of Jesus. This was sent to Poland; Paul, Bilinski, and one of the servants also wrote to the

Baron Kostka, who was filled with astonishment at the strange news, and grieved bitterly when he found that his dear son, Stanislaus, was lost to him. But his anger fell upon those who had been charged with the care of him, and he declared that as long as he lived, no priest of the Company of Jesus should set foot in Poland, and that he would find his son, wherever he might be.

Stanislaus reached Augsburg safely, but the Father he sought was not there, and in spite of his long and weary journey, he started once more to a town some miles farther, where he hoped to find him. On the road he came to a church in which a number of people were collected, and he entered it, in the hope of receiving Holy Communion, but to his great grief found that he was amongst Lutherans. Bursting into tears at the sight of that place in the hands of heretics, he was praying earnestly for their conversion, when there became visible to himself only, a company of angels radiant with glory, amongst whom was one, more majestic

than the rest, who bore in his hands the Holy Eucharist, and gave Communion to Stanislaus, whilst the others ranged themselves around him in adoration. Then the heavenly visitors vanished, leaving the young Saint weeping for joy, and after spending a short time in thanksgiving, he rose with new strength, and arriving soon at Dillinghem, found the Jesuits' college, and Father Canisius, who received him gladly. Knowing how much pleased God is by His servants bearing courageously great trials of their humility, this Father sent Stanislaus to the school which the Jesuits had at Dillinghem, to act there as a servant in the kitchen. But finding this young man so obedient and humble, after a few weeks of these trials to prove the strength of his goodwill, he was sent to the college at Rome to receive the habit. Before the day of his clothing, he received a letter from his father reproaching him bitterly, to which Stanislaus replied, by the desire of his superiors, in which he gave his reasons for choos-

ing the religious life, and begged for his father's blessing. Then he prepared for the happy day when he was to obtain his great desire of being admitted into the Company of Jesus. Once really a novice, Stanislaus was filled with joy; his face shone with happiness, and he appeared to advance daily in perfection, giving edification to all by an exterior life, which proved the purity of his soul. But although he was so happy and peaceful, Stanislaus felt an intense longing to leave the earth, and the thought of death was his greatest joy, even begging God that it might come soon. The Feast of the Assumption being at hand, he fixed on that day as that upon which he longed to die, and with the simplicity of a child he wrote a letter to the Blessed Virgin, begging her to get this grace for him, then folding the paper, he covered it with tears, and placed it next to his heart. In the morning, at his Communion, he begged S. Lawrence to convey what he had written to his Blessed Mother. We are not told in what

way Mary received the request of her child, but from that moment he felt a perfect assurance that his prayer was heard. On that day he went from the altar to undertake the humblest duties in the kitchen, having begged the permission of his superior, but in the evening, to his great delight he began to be feverish and ill, and by the afternoon of the 14th of August, he became so much worse, that the Fathers believed in his approaching death. Then he begged leave to die upon the ground, but the superior refused this, and would only permit him to be placed upon a little mattress. Here he made his confession, and received Viaticum, and when they asked him if he was willing to live or die, according to God's holy Will, he replied, "My heart is ready, O God, my heart is ready." Three times over he made his confession, and then lay peacefully, with his eyes raised to heaven, or turned towards a little image of the Virgin, which he pressed to his lips from time to time. After midnight, he began to fail fast,

and took leave of his companions, begging their pardon for any offence he might have given them; then, with the crucifix in his hand, he called the saints to his assistance, especially those to whom he had a particular devotion, and kissed the Feet of Jesus upon the cross constantly. Suddenly his face changed, and a wonderful radiance rested on it, as he gazed earnestly first at one side and then at the other, for a vision was granted him of his Blessed Mother, surrounded by a group of virgins, who had come to bear him to heaven, and it was this which gave the look of rapture to his face. The master of novices bending towards the dying Saint, just heard the first few faint words which told of the radiance which was visible to him, and as the sun rose upon the Feast of the Assumption, he breathed his last, and was taken from earth to heaven.

They scattered flowers around his body to show how pure and spotless his life had been, and in his hand was placed a rosary, and the

little image of our Lady, which had been so precious to him ; then all the Fathers and brothers of the Company came to kiss his hands and feet, shedding many tears at the loss of their holy novice, whose short life of eighteen years left behind so sweet a memory amongst all who had ever known and loved him.





S. Agnes.

THERE were many martyrs who died nobly for their faith during the early ages of the Church, under the bitter persecutions of the emperors of Rome, yet perhaps not one of these honoured names is known and loved as dearly as the little virgin saint and martyr of thirteen years old.

Agnes was of a rich and noble Roman family, and her rank, her beauty, and her gentle sweetness gained her much esteem and love, but unfortunately they won for her a love she did not prize, as she had already given all her heart to God, leaving no place there for any creature. As she went to and from school many eyes followed her graceful

form admiringly, and a Roman youth, whose father was a great and powerful man in the city, began to love her so much that he always met her in those streets through which she had to pass.

As soon as possible he made himself known to her, begging that she would give him her affection; but remembering the promise she had made to her dear Lord, she answered him at once that she was already given to one Who deserved all her love.

Still the young man thought of her as a maiden who might be persuaded to answer him differently some other time, so he tried to win her by rich presents, laying at her feet costly jewels of the rarest kind.

Did Agnes waver? No; never for an instant could those thoughts which were all given to God, that love which had been so early promised to a Divine Spouse, turn to the pagan youth, and so she spurned his gifts as she spurned his affection, with cold, firm words.

That base, mean love changed then to bitter hatred, and as his revenge, the young Roman accused Agnes before his father's court of being a Christian. That name was enough in those cruel days to bring down the sentence of imprisonment and a terrible death, so the gentle Agnes was seized and brought before the heathen governor and the other nobles. They questioned her, they threatened her, but Agnes was strong with the strength God gave her, and she only answered that Jesus was her over and she would never give her heart to any other, however great and noble.

The governor laughed scornfully and said that he would find such a way of treating her that her Christ should have no more love for her.

"I am not afraid of anything you can do to me, for I have an angel of God to protect me everywhere," was Agnes' reply; and when the wicked man had her sent to a terrible house, where bad people met together, whose thoughts and words were all sin, the place was filled

with a resplendent brightness in which appeared an angel from heaven, whilst the wretched creatures fled trembling from her presence, crying out that "the God of Agnes was omnipotent."

The pure young Roman girl must have felt as her Master felt when He was exposed to the rude gaze of the multitude, and yet God's presence made her forget the shame and suffering in the fervent prayer which absorbed her soul.

During this time the young pagan who had tried to win her love, came to gaze rudely at her with a party of his bad companions; he stretched out his hand to touch her, but as he did so an unseen power struck him dead upon the floor.

There was great fear in Rome then as the news spread, "The governor's son lies dead at the feet of Agnes;" the father came in terror and haste, and kneeling before the maiden, begged her to obtain from her God the life of his son; and Agnes prayed (for no revengeful

feeling was in her pure heart), and even as she spoke the young man opened his eyes and went away, confessing the truth of the Christian's faith.

A great crowd were there then who called out that she was a sorceress, and would have her burned; but the governor's voice was not among these, he could not condemn to death the maiden who had asked from God the life of his son, so he hurried away, declaring that if she was sentenced to die it should not be by him; and so Aspasius—the next in power—ordered the gentle Agnes to be burned as one who had dealings with evil spirits.

Into the great amphitheatre they dragged her, where a large fire was set burning, and they cast her into the very midst of the cruel flames; but even there she prayed, and the flames dividing, showed her perfectly unhurt.

The fierce anger of the people grew fiercer now, and at their clamour Aspasius gave her over to the executioner's axe, yet she showed no fear; her cheek was fresh, her lips were

still and calm, whilst he who was to take away her life stood pale and trembling. Then, amidst shouts of triumph from the multitude, and the hidden tears and sorrow of those few who shuddered to see her die, the brave and loving soul of Agnes passed to the arms of her heavenly Bridegroom.

Strange it may seem that one so young and gentle should meet a cruel death without a word or sign of fear, but the secret of her strength is, that it all came from God, and through Him, Agnes could "do all things," as we, too, in our smaller way, can bear any shame or suffering which comes to us, for the sake of the same dear Lord Christ Jesus.





S. Catherine of Alexandria.

IN the early ages of the Church, when Christians were being terribly persecuted, the noble maiden, Catherine, dwelt in the city of Alexandria, when Maximian was emperor.

Though only eighteen years old, she had made such great progress in the study of the Greek and Roman literature that she knew more than many clever men; she was also very retiring and humble, because those who have learned most are never conceited like those who have only learned a little.

But, better than all, Catherine loved to study the Christian faith, that she might be able to uphold it against those who would not believe,

and in doing this her humble soul learned more and more of the love of God and the sweetness of sacrificing everything for Him.

The prisons in the city were filled with those who were suffering for the Christian faith, and in spite of the peril, this noble maiden felt it a happy duty to visit and comfort them, for it seemed as if Jesus was always whispering to her heart those words she had copied so carefully on a scroll of parchment, "I was in prison, and you came to me."

The tyrant emperor had heard of her learning, and his whole mind was bent upon forcing her to believe in the gods of the heathen, and he issued commands that the greatest philosophers should assemble, before whom Catherine should appear and be compelled to give up the faith she professed for the worship of idols.

She was bending over her studies when the heavy tread of armed soldiers was heard in the portal, who entered her apartment roughly; but upon seeing her simple, holy face they were abashed and awkward, as the commander

of the band delivered his message, ordering her to accompany him to the presence of Maximin.

Her women servants cried and tore their veils when they saw their young and gentle mistress placed in the midst of the rough soldiers, but Catherine was calm, for she trusted in God that He would take care of her and teach her what to say, as He had promised in the sacred words she knew so well, to those who for His sake should be brought before governors and kings.

Fifty of the most learned men of Egypt were waiting in the hall of Maximin's palace for the Christian maiden, who stood in her pure white tunic before them, meekly hearing and answering their arguments ; but instead of their winning her back to their heathen worship, God's truth was so powerful that many amongst them were converted by the earnest words of Catherine, and afterwards many of that number suffered martyrdom for love of Jesus.

The emperor was very angry then, and ordered the girl to be severely scourged and

cast into prison, where, for eleven days, she was shut up without food; but during that time, Maximin's own wife and the general of the army went to visit the captive, and were also led to a strong love for the Christian religion, for which they were soon afterwards martyred, but before that happened Catherine was brought out to die. A horrible wheel set with spikes had been prepared, upon which she was bound in such a way that her delicate body would be torn to pieces, but at her prayer, the wheel was suddenly broken to atoms and fell to the ground, and she remained uninjured. Then Maximin called upon one of his soldiers to take his axe and behead her, which was done immediately, and thus her soul was set free, whilst a bright band of angels bore away her blessed body and laid it to rest on Mount Sinai, where to this day the tomb is shown on the summit of one of the mountain peaks.

S. Catherine is the special patron of the young who are pursuing their studies, for she teaches that the great end of learning is to be

the honour and glory of God, and that the love of Christ surpasses all the knowledge which ever was, or will be, gained.

The 25th of November has been chosen for the festival of the young and pure martyr of Alexandria, and the collect for the Mass of that day commemorates the carrying of her body to the mountain, which was then calm and peaceful, like the heaven where her soul was dwelling with Christ, for whose love she had suffered and died.

“But swiftly away to a holy mount

The angels, rejoicing, S. Catherine bore,
And now in the mansions above she dwells,
With our Lord and His Mother for ever-
more.”





S. Cecilia.

TWAS the eve of Cecilia's bridal day, that day when, against her will, her noble parents were forcing her to marry the Roman youth, Valerian, although she had long consecrated her heart and life to God. She had wept and pleaded in vain ; now she prayed with a firm trust in God's deliverance, even at the last hour, that He would keep the heart which was given to Him only. In answer to that prayer, Cecilia was favoured with the sight and conscious presence of her guardian angel, and seated at her organ, her voice rose up in a clear sweet song of praise to God, in Whom was all her confidence.

She had never been like the usual Roman

maidens ; she was so modest, so grave, that people said she had the glance and step of an angel, but she had won the love of Valerian, who was still a Pagan, yet who was to become a Christian and a martyr, too, by her means.

That marriage eve he went to the palace where Cecilia lived with her parents, and sought her presence, and once again she told him that her promise was made to know no other spouse than Christ, that He would protect her, and that even then an angel defender was by her side, whose bright sword was outspread between them. Valerian was awed now, all but convinced that Cecilia might never be his, but he asked her to show him the angel, and he would believe ; he hears that when his eyes are opened by the waters of baptism, when he is a Christian, he shall behold the heavenly spirit, and at the maiden's bidding he carries a note to Urban, the Pope, afterwards martyred, who is in hiding in one of the catacombs hewn out of the rock.

Valerian comes out a Christian—a new crea-

ture in Christ Jesus—who takes his way back to Rome, knowing that death is probably before him and before Cecilia, death for the faith they both hold now.

As he sought the apartment of the maiden, he drew back awed at the bright light that streamed forth, for she was kneeling in prayer, her hands and face raised to heaven, and beside her a glorious angel. Humbly yet lovingly Valerian passed in, and knelt upon the other side, as the angel placed on each young head two crowns of lilies and roses—flowers of heaven, not of earth. Thus crowned, they remain upon their knees in prayer, and Valerian's petition is that his brother, too, may receive light, which is granted him. They were two of the most noble youths of the city, and when the news spread that they were Christians, the Prefect had them taken prisoners, and beaten cruelly, then beheaded for the sake of Christ, Whom they had only just known. The news is taken to Cecilia—death had come very near her now, and she knew not how soon

she might be seized and dragged to torture. So she set about arranging her affairs, consigning all she had to the use of the poor; then the high-born maiden was taken captive, and brought before the Prefect. She was not afraid, she was longing for martyrdom, and when the sentence was passed, there was no sign of suffering upon her face. They doomed her to be confined in her own baths—the splendid marble baths of the old Roman palaces—there to be burned by the most intense heat, kept up by the stoves below. Just as we read in Scripture of the three youths who walked in the midst of the flaming furnace praising God, Cecilia walked through her baths unhurt by the fierce heat, her hands extended in prayer, her voice rising in clear soft hymns to heaven. Fresh fuel was added to the fires hour by hour—no man dared brave an entrance into those heated baths, and yet the words of praise came fresh and strong, till evening faded into night.

Four and twenty hours went by, still Cecilia sang and prayed, and all heard and marvelled

that she did not die. Then the fires were ordered to burn low, so that an executioner might bear the heat sufficiently to enter and destroy her with the sword; and when with some difficulty he ventured in to the apartment where but for the power of God she must long before have been burned to ashes, her cheek was cool and fresh, as if no heat had been near her. A moment more, the sword pierced her heart, and Cecilia was amongst the company of virgin martyrs in heaven.





S. Lawrence.

THE name of the martyr, S. Lawrence, is commemorated in all parts of the world by the dedication of many churches to him, who met death so nobly in the year 258. He was the Roman deacon and secretary of Pope Sixtus II., who upon the 8th of August in that year was seized at the altar by a band of soldiers, who carried him before the Prefect. On his way, Lawrence met the Holy Father thus captured, and begged to accompany him, but Sixtus answered that his deacon should follow him in three days, but by a rougher, harder road. The Saint understood by this that he was to be martyred thus soon, so he returned home to put all his affairs in

order, and to distribute large sums of money amongst the poor of Rome.

The Prefect was told of the magnificent alms which the deacon was bestowing, and believing that he must have the care of immense treasures, sent for him and said, "You Christians complain that you are harshly treated, but I threaten you with neither rack nor torture ; I only ask what you can give me with the greatest ease—some of your costly vessels and golden candlesticks, and all the coin in your possession."

Lawrence replied that it was true the Christian Church was very rich, but that he must have time to make an inventory of all its treasures, upon which the Prefect allowed a day's delay, and the Saint set about visiting all the poor in the city, desiring them to present themselves in the court the following morning.

When the appointed time came, Lawrence was there, but on being asked for his inventory of the treasures of the Church, he pointed to the assembled poor, saying :—

"These are the jewels of the Church—these are they in whom Christ lives."

The Prefect was furious with anger, and turned to Lawrence with an expression of rage upon his countenance, whereupon the holy deacon answered :—

"Why should you be angry? I show you redeemed men, who are the true gold of Jesus Christ. You wanted gold—I put the Church's gold before you. As for the treasures you sought, the hands of the poor have carried them to the treasury of heaven."

Then the Prefect insisted that Lawrence should deny Christ, and upon his firm refusal, he was seized, stripped of his clothes, and torn almost to pieces with the rods with which he was beaten. But he still persisted in the faith of Jesus, so that a fresh method of torture was tried, and a fire of coals was prepared, over which Lawrence was placed on a gridiron and slowly roasted to death. As he was stretched upon this cruel bed, the Saint cried out :—

"I care nothing for your torments. I worship

God, and God alone," and when the executioners piled up the glowing coals under him, he laughed and cried out, "I give God thanks."

An angel from heaven was sent by God to strengthen His servant in his terrible sufferings, and presently he turned to the Prefect, saying, "One side of the roast is done enough now, you may order me to be turned and eaten if you like, but you cannot seize upon the Church's treasures."

The torture was long, but at last his release approached, and the noble martyr prayed and thanked God that he had been deemed worthy to suffer for His sake, and then his triumph was over—Lawrence's soul was in heaven, and only his burnt and blackened body remained to the cruel Prefect, who gave it up to the hands of the Christians, who buried it that same night.





S. Thomas of Canterbury.

IN the year 1117, upon the 21st of December, a child was born in our own city of London whose name was destined to shine in the long list of martyrs who have laid down their lives for the love of God. This child was Thomas—the son of Gilbert-à-Becket and his pious wife Matilda—who sought to train him in the fear of God and reverence to the Blessed Virgin, under whose special patronage he was placed. His mother would often weigh S. Thomas during his infancy, putting meat, clothing, and bread into the opposite scale, which were to be distributed amongst the poor, so that her alms increased with his growth and were all offered

to bring down heavenly blessings upon the child's life.

While still very little, S. Thomas was seized with fever, and when he was getting better, the Blessed Virgin appeared to him in the form of a beautiful lady, who bent over his bedside, and, promising him that he would soon be well, gave him two golden keys, which she said were the keys of paradise, of which he was to have charge.

Thomas went to a school in the city when first his studies began, but he was soon given into the care of the Prior of Merton, who was afterwards his confessor and friend, and witnessed his martyrdom.

Gilbert-à-Becket was a native of Normandy, and so many of his own countrymen came to visit him in London ; one of them called Richier de l'Egle, was very fond of hunting and hawking, and often took S. Thomas as a companion. One of these times they had reached a foot-bridge across a mill-stream, which the knight crossed safely, but Thomas, taking less care, managed

to tumble with his horse into the stream, and being unable to swim, he was rapidly borne along in the direction of the mill-wheel, which would certainly have crushed him to pieces. But at the cry for help the miller heard, the mill was stopped in time for the boy to be saved, and dragged out of the water almost insensible.

After finishing his education in England, S. Thomas was sent to Paris for a short time, when he returned to London and became clerk to the sheriffs until he was about one and twenty; then his parents died within a short interval, leaving their family very ill provided for. S. Thomas next entered the service of a relation who was a rich merchant, and thus learnt habits of business which were very useful to him afterwards, when he was raised to a high place in the Church.

Many times Thomas had been advised to offer himself to the service of Theobald, the Archbishop of Canterbury, but his humility kept him back until he was five and twenty,

when he was persuaded to do so by a friend of his father's, who felt sure that a higher vocation awaited him than the business of the world.

Theobald received the young man with much kindness, and S. Thomas at once set to work to make up for the deficiencies he quickly discovered in himself, and succeeded in gaining the esteem and confidence of the archbishop so entirely, that when Henry Plantagenet came to be king, Theobald obtained for à-Becket the place of Lord High Chancellor of England. This office was a very important one; he who held it was the keeper of the king's seal, and took charge of the royal chapel, and had the disposal of all the abbeys and bishoprics which were vacant and belonging to the king's right of patronage; many other privileges belonged to the position which S. Thomas had been given, and which he filled with such great discretion. His life now was full of the whirl of state business, and yet his heart was not in it; often he would speak of his weariness and longing for a quiet and

retired place where he might serve God only ; but he used his power for the good of the Church and country, and for the divine glory, influencing the king to many acts of mercy and justice.

But whilst he was surrounded by luxury and grandeur, his own fare was as simple as it could be. Under his splendid clothing he wore a hair-shirt, and after passing a day in royal pleasures, he would lie upon the floor during the night, doing many acts of humiliation and penance, and thus he remained unharmed by the world in which he had to live, keeping his heart fixed upon God.

Archbishop Theobald died during the month of April, 1161, so Henry II. fixed upon Thomas-à-Becket to succeed him, and in June, 1162, he was consecrated in the Cathedral of Canterbury, in the presence of an immense assemblage.

A different life began for S. Thomas now—one which he had long desired. Every night he rose to say Divine Office with his monks,

and then he washed the feet of thirteen poor men, to whom he gave a good meal before sending them away. At the dawn of day, he slept for a short time, and then rose to study the Scriptures; after which, he gave himself to prayer before saying Mass, or assisting at it. During dinner, he had some spiritual book read aloud, but he did not force his soldiers to be present lest they might grow weary. Seats were always kept for a number of poor people, but afterwards a large quantity of food was given away to the crowds who came asking alms.

After a time, the king's great friendship for S. Thomas began to grow cooler, and the first signs of his displeasure arose in several ways. One was a sermon which S. Thomas preached before Henry, in which he said that spiritual power was nobler and higher than that which is temporal; another was, that the archbishop objected to and succeeded in preventing an unfair tax being laid upon the people.

Then, Henry encouraged an abbot in refusing to take the oath of obedience to the arch-

bishop, and it became a struggle whether the Church should be governed as our Lord Jesus Christ had appointed, or whether a king was to be its ruler.

Great difficulties seemed hanging over England, for Henry wished to begin reforms and changes which S. Thomas refused to agree to, but when the king pledged himself never to do anything to the injury of the Church, the Saint believed his word, and said that upon that condition he would not oppose the royal power.

A council of bishops and nobles was called to meet, so that S. Thomas should be forced to repeat this promise in public, and a paper was drawn up, upon which these "customs," as they were called, had been written, to which he was required now to affix his signature and seal. The Saint, who saw now what he was being made to consent to, refused to sign until he had communicated with the Pope, and no rage of Henry's could induce him to swerve from this decision; but his heart was sad and

heavy, for he feared that by his first general promise to accede to the king's wishes, he had been weak instead of strong in the cause of the Church which it was his duty to guard and protect. So tender was his conscience, that for this fault which he deemed so serious, S. Thomas performed severe penance, and deprived himself of the right to say Mass until he had received the forgiveness of the Pope. The Pope wrote to comfort him, and assure him that for any fault there had been of weakness in yielding to the king, God would grant forgiveness, and supported him in his determination not to sign the royal papers which contained such alterations in the government of the Church.

From that time, S. Thomas began to prepare for his martyr's crown, for Henry Plantagenet sought to annoy and persecute him in every possible way—he was ordered to give up his property, called upon to pay an impossible sum of money, and summoned to appear before the court which had judged him.

On the first day, the archbishop was confined

at home by sickness, but on the Tuesday he rose, said Mass at his own altar, in which he offered up himself in union with the Divine Sacrifice, to suffer according to God's holy Will ; then, as the custom of the time was, in any special trial, he placed the Blessed Sacrament in his breast and set out for the court, carrying his own cross, in token of his sacred office. When the king heard of his arrival, he was awe-struck, and stayed in an inner room, for he feared to face the representative of God, and there his nobles followed him, leaving S. Thomas and his bishops alone in the council-chamber. The Earl of Leicester at last returned to pass judgment, but the archbishop refused to hear him, reminding him that he had no power over one who was the spiritual father of the king, the nobles and people, and then rising, he left the court, saying, " I put my cause and the cause of the Church under the protection of God and the Holy Father."

On reaching the gate, S. Thomas mounted his horse, but they found themselves locked in ;

however, one of his followers saw a bunch of keys hanging on a nail in the wall, and, fortunately, the first which he tried opened the gate.

When the king heard how the archbishop had left, he was frightened lest some terrible judgments from Heaven should befall him, so he thought to protect himself from God's punishment by sending a herald through the town to order that no one should do S. Thomas any injury ; but his command was unnecessary, for the people loved our Saint so warmly that they were rejoicing over his safe return from the council. They crowded round him, so that he could scarcely get through their midst, kneeling for his blessing, and the sight of their devotion gave him great joy in the midst of his troubles.

Many of his followers had deserted the holy archbishop, but the poor whom he loved were invited to fill their vacant places at his table.

When supper was ended, S. Thomas desired to remain the whole night in the Church, but

after Office had been sung, he escaped from the monastery with three faithful friends upon strong horses which had been prepared in case a flight was necessary. It was a wet night, and they rode unobserved along the streets, reaching a village half-way to Lincoln before morning, where they rested a short time, and then started again for Lincoln.

Here S. Thomas with one of his followers took a boat and went by water to an island on which stood a convent belonging to the canonesses of S. Gilbert of Sempringham, whilst the others journeyed there by land. They rested three days, and then set forth once more, travelling on foot towards Kent, from whence they crossed to the Flemish coast, landing after a stormy passage near Gravelines. But here the Saint was so weary, that his friends tried to get a horse for him; however, when the boy who had been sent for one returned, it was with a miserable ass, without a saddle, and with a halter of straw; so they threw a cloak over it, and S. Thomas mounted and rode a

couple of miles, but he found it was more wearisome than walking, so he dismounted and dragged his weary steps along with great difficulty.

A poor woman, struck with his noble appearance and evident fatigue, ran into her house and fetched him a rough stick to help him on his way, which he accepted with many thanks.

Soon after they met a party of young men, one of whom carried a hawk on his wrist; and as the archbishop's eyes rested upon the bird, one of them recognized him, and exclaimed, "I believe that is the Archbishop of Canterbury." But as one of his followers retorted, "You simpleton, did ever you see an archbishop travel in such a guise?" they were allowed to pass on without further remark, and at length, after many difficulties, arrived safely at S. Bertin's monastery, where a trusty follower was waiting for S. Thomas, with a portion of the plate and money he had secured from Canterbury.

But they could not remain long where they were, in the territory of the Count of Flanders, so once again they journeyed on, until they were safe in the dominions of Louis, King of France.

For seven years the Saint remained in exile—years in which he lived as a simple monk at Pontigny, in the community which received him with great delight, joining the brethren in their out-door occupations, assisting at their Office in choir, and keeping to a course of mortification and penance. Now the quiet and leisure he had often desired was his.

It pleased Almighty God at this time to reveal to our Saint the future before him, for once, while he was praying after Mass at the altar of S. Stephen, he heard a voice calling "Thomas! Thomas!" upon which he answered, "Where art thou, Lord?" Then the heavenly voice replied, "I am Jesus, thy brother and thy Lord. My Church shall be glorified in thy blood, and thou shalt be glorified in Me."

During the archbishop's absence, the King

of England took all his property at Canterbury, banished all his servants, even turning every poor man and woman who had shown him any kindness in his wanderings, out of their homes in the cold winter-time, to seek shelter in Flanders. But his cruelty made every Catholic in Europe indignant with him, and charitable to the poor sufferers. The King of France tried to put an end to Henry's angry feelings, and bring him round to be once more friendly with the exiled archbishop, but in vain. After giving him time to cool down his passion, S. Thomas himself wrote to the king in a kind and gentle way, but no answer was returned to the first or second letter, and the third brought a sharp answer; and yet Henry was very much frightened, for he dreaded the sentence of excommunication which he knew he had deserved. Obstinate as he was, his faith in the Church was sufficient to make him fear her anger. Indeed the Saint felt now that his next step must be to cut off the rebellious monarch from communion with the Church,

but by the advice of the Pope he put off the sentence in the hope of peace being made.

After several years of humiliations and false accusations, which the Saint endured with patience and holy joy, a reconciliation was brought about by the King of France, who had persuaded Henry Plantagenet to be his guest, and see the archbishop once more ; and at this meeting Henry asked him to return, promising to restore him his see of Canterbury, and to uphold the power of the Church.

It was on December 1, 1170, that S. Thomas landed at Sandwich, from which he continued his journey to Canterbury upon the same day—the place where within a month he was to die for the cause of God. His journey was a continual triumph, for people flocked from all parts to meet and welcome him, and in his own city there was every sign of joy—the churches resounding with music, and the streets decked out as for a public holiday. S. Thomas went straight to his own cathedral
his face shining with the happiness of

his heart, and in the chapter-house he preached a sermon from the words, which seemed almost like a preparation for his fast-approaching death, "We have here no abiding city, but seek one to come."

In about a week, the archbishop proceeded to London, where he was received with great expressions of joy, the priests and people meeting him, and the "Te Deum" being sung. The young king (whom Henry had caused to be crowned during his own lifetime) sent the archbishop a message, forbidding him to make any more processions about the country, and advising him to return to Canterbury. This gave S. Thomas much sorrow, for he knew that Henry's son was really attached to him, and that this message must be caused by the influence of others—it seemed to confirm him in his belief that new persecutions and sufferings were beginning. The Saint wrote to a friend (the Abbot of S. Albans) to meet him at Harrow, and begged him to go and procure him an inter-

view with the young king; and the Abbot obeyed, but without success.

Then S. Thomas returned to Canterbury for the Feast of Christmas, but some of his enemies had already crossed over to Normandy, where King Henry was staying, complaining of his renewed power, and of the journeys he was making amidst the rejoicing people. Henry Plantagenet's eyes flashed with rage, and with an oath he cursed all those who did not rid him of one who annoyed him in this way. Then he left them, little thinking what were to be the consequences of those words spoken in his furious passion.

The four knights went out from King Henry's presence, determining to take him at his word, and, starting by four different routes, they reached England and Saltwood Castle at the same time. Next day they went to S. Augustine's Abbey, outside the walls of Canterbury, and spent the time in making their preparations for the sinful deed they had in view.

The last morning of his life, the Saint assisted at Mass in the Cathedral, went to confession, scourged himself three times in his spirit of contrition and penance, and spent some hours in talking with his monks of spiritual things. At four in the afternoon the wicked knights came and asked for the archbishop, who received them with his usual courtesy, but they took no notice, looking at each other so strangely that he felt sure they had come for an evil purpose. They professed to have brought a message from the king, but not having an opportunity of attacking their victim, they at last left the room noisily, with threatening words.

The archbishop, with his monks, went to assist at vespers in the choir, but he withdrew alone to the altar of S. Benedict to think and pray, for he felt convinced that the hour of his death had come. As he was just ascending the steps to the choir, one of the knights appeared with his sword drawn, followed by the other three. Some one rushed

to bolt the door leading to the cloister, so as to give the Saint an opportunity of escape, but he came down the steps to meet the knights, asking them what they desired. "Your death," replied one, and they tried to drag him from the church, but the Saint pushed the murderer from him, saying, "Touch me not—you forget that you owe me submission." Then, finding they could not get him from the church, Fitz-Urse waved his sword above the Saint, whilst he bowed his head, and commended his soul to God. Three times they struck him, and then falling on his face before the altar of S. Benedict, he breathed his last, saying, "For the Name of Jesus, and for the defence of His Church, I am ready to die." Then the wretched murderers ran through the palace, taking every valuable they could secure, and afterwards they departed, glorying in their awful deed.

When the news spread, people flocked to the church, weeping and lamenting for the Saint, who was so dear to them. They threw

themselves down by the holy corpse, kissing the hands and feet with reverent love, while others secretly cut shreds from his garments or took away some of the blood which had flowed from him. That night there was an awful thunder-storm, and amidst the flashes of lightning which lit up the church, the monks kept watch by the remains of the holy martyr, who lay there beautiful in death, a calm smile still on his lips as it had been through life, a fresh colour upon his cheeks, and an air of peace surrounding him, as if he had died in an untroubled sleep rather than by violence. Next day they dressed him in his hair shirt, with the vestments of his office to cover it, and, laying him in a marble coffin in the crypt, they closed and left it for a while. But miracles began to be worked by the relics which had been carried away, and people flocked to the church, begging to kneel at the shrine.

Then the enemies of the martyred Saint threatened to carry off his remains by force, so that the monks in terror were compelled to

place the body in a wooden coffin, and hide it behind the altar of the Blessed Virgin until they could carry it once more down to the crypt, where it was enclosed in a marble coffin, round which strong walls were built, and in the roof of which two openings were left, through which pilgrims might touch and kiss the coffin. For a long time the cathedral was in mourning, for the terrible bloodshed which had desecrated it; no Mass was said there, the crucifixes were veiled, the altars stripped, and everything wore an aspect of gloom.

When the news reached Henry Plantagenet, his remorse was terrible. Too late, he saw the consequences of his ungoverned passion—too late he mourned for those hasty words which had brought about the death of such a faithful servant of God, and one who had been so good and patient a friend to himself. He shut himself up in his misery, he took off his royal robes and dressed in sackcloth, he fasted, he did penances, but God inflicted greater punishments on him than these.

For more than a year Henry was excommunicated, and then had to do public penance for his sin before absolution was given him.

On the 21st February, 1173, S. Thomas of Canterbury was solemnly canonized as a martyr for the cause of God, and his festival appointed to be kept on the 29th December, which was the day of his death. The body was removed to the place in the chapel of the Blessed Trinity where he had said his first Mass, and a splendid structure was raised to contain those holy relics. There the rich and great, the poor and unknown thronged to the shrine of the martyred S. Thomas, through whose intercessions many prayers were answered.

The death of the Saint of Canterbury brought peace to the Church in England, for in Henry's contrition he restored all the rights which he had deprived her of in that or any other land; and although in later times, when this unhappy country had turned away from the true faith, the martyr's tomb was destroyed and his sacred relics burned, his name still lives,

and his memory is cherished as it deserves. Now in our own times S. Thomas has been given the title of Patron of the Secular Clergy, and churches are rising up in honour of him who shed his blood to keep for the Church of Christ in England that place which, though lost in later years by the faithlessness of its own children, will belong to it again when the errors which prevail are overcome by the power of God's truth, and Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament is dwelling within every sanctuary throughout the land, amidst the reverent love of a faithful Catholic people.





S. Philip Neri.

IN reading the life of this great Saint, who has the title of the Apostle of Rome, we feel as if he had come to teach us how to be very holy, yet cheerful and gay ; how to keep us as closely united to God amidst the bustle and work of the great busy world, as if we were in the shelter of the quiet cloister.

“Filippo Romolo,” as his baptismal name was registered in the church of S. John Baptist, was born in the city of Florence on the 21st of July, 1515, and his father, Francesco Neri, and his mother, Lucrezia, were persons of good family and great piety, who tried to

bring up their four children in the fear of God, and the faithful practice of their religion.

The little Philip was always remarkably obedient, and when his own mother died, and his father in time married a second wife, the child paid this step-mother the same respect as he had shown to his own parent in every trifling thing.

Only once did Philip cause his father to be displeased with him, and that was when he gave his sister Catherine a push for disturbing him and Elizabeth when they were reading the Psalms together, and then he was so sorry, and cried so bitterly for his fault, that he was quickly forgiven. All his little companions loved him because he was so kind to them, so ready to give up to their wishes when they prayed ; indeed, it seemed as if nothing could make him angry or impatient, and they called him " Good Pippo," because he was so sweet-tempered.

An accident happened to this little boy when he was about eight years of age, which, strange

to say, did not cause him the least injury. A donkey was standing in the court-yard, and without thinking of any danger, Philip jumped on his back, and together they fell down several steps into a cellar, in such a way that he had the donkey entirely upon him. The servants were terrified, and ran to the spot, expecting that he would be seriously injured, if not dead; but they drew him out quite safely, not even bruised or stunned by the fall, so wonderfully had God preserved him.

When the time for his education began, Philip won the love of his schoolfellows by his good humour and gentle gaiety, just as he had won the little playmates of his earliest years, and he delighted his masters by his rapid progress and intelligence.

We can be sure that this boy would not have been so kind, so obedient, so industrious, if he had not been filled with the love of God. It was his prayerfulness, his constant recollection of the Divine presence which kept him good and pure and modest during all the trials

and temptations which no youth is wholly free from. Yet with Philip there was no *talk-ing* about his devotion—it was quiet and persevering goodness which tried to pass unobserved, and even his desire and hope to be called by God to serve him as a priest was treasured in his heart as a secret thing, which was better hidden than made known to others.

If anything troubled Philip, he turned to God for help, with the simple trust of a little child. Having once lost a gold chain in the street, he found it by an immediate prayer, and in the same way regained a parcel of clothes which he had let fall he knew not where.

With all his joyousness and gaiety, Philip had a great longing to suffer for Christ, and when he heard of what his Lord had endured for him, tears would run down his cheeks as his heart burned to prove his grateful love by bearing some pain or trial for His sake. So when, at the age of fifteen years, he was very ill with a violent fever, he never complained,

and even went about as usual, until at last it was found out, and he was compelled to keep his bed, and take proper remedies.

Philip showed his contempt for what the world thinks great in many ways. A list of his ancestors was once showed him, with the idea of giving him pleasure by the knowledge of the good birth of those to whom he was related, but in indignation he seized and tore it to pieces, saying that he only cared to have his name written in the Lamb's book of life.

As he grew near sixteen years of age, his parents began to think much about his future occupation, and having a very rich cousin at Naples, Francesco Neri sent Philip to him, hoping that he might inherit his property. Nothing could have been less pleasing to the lad, but he applied himself diligently to the new duties of commerce, and became so dear to his relative, that the old man resolved to make him his heir. Yet while Philip engaged in business from obedience to his father, he gave every moment of recreation to prayer.

The town of S. Germano, where he was then living, lies at the foot of a mountain which is rent by three immense chasms, caused by the earthquake which happened when Jesus died. The Benedictine monks had built a little chapel in the largest of these chasms, and there, as soon as his duties were finished, Philip would hasten to pray, and hour after hour he would kneel before a crucifix, meditating upon the sacred passion of Christ, and begging most earnestly for the teaching of the Holy Spirit, that he might lead a life which was higher and better. Day after day, night after night, he prayed on thus humbly and patiently, till God showed him what to do, and gave him a strong determination to leave home and friends and all earthly honour and greatness, so as to serve his Creator without any reserve. When he told his intention to his cousin, the old man was very much distressed, and tried to persuade him to turn from his holy purpose. As he found that the hope of wealth would not influence him, he tried to touch the youth's

heart by speaking of the claims of his family, but Philip only thanked him for his kindness, and kept firm in his resolve, then bade farewell to S. Germano, and took his way to Rome. It was the year 1533 when Philip Neri entered the holy city, a perfect stranger, without a home and without money, and for the sixty-two years which passed before his death, he never left it. A gentleman who met him, and was much struck with his modest and pleasant manners, gave him a small room in his house, and a certain quantity of flour every year, in return for which Philip instructed his two little sons; yet although he dwelt under their roof, he did not mix with the family, but spent almost as solitary a life as if he had been a hermit. He eat daily a little loaf, which he fetched from a baker's in exchange for the flour, and though the servants of the household were very kind to him, and wanted to bring him better food, he would not accept it, and going down to the court-yard, sat by the side of a well there, and dined off bread and water,

with now and then a few olives. Even this poor diet was taken sparingly; very often he would go without anything for three days, and never took more than one meal in the day. There was no furniture but a small bed in his room, with a rope extending across it, upon which he hung his clothes, and here he was in the habit of praying many hours of the night.

When Philip began to study theology, he soon gained the first place among his fellow-students, and when his masters found out his wonderful talents, united to such deep humility, they gave him the old name he had won as a little boy in Florence, "Philip the Good." Besides study, besides prayer, he engaged in many works of charity, visiting the hospitals, and catechizing the poor who crowded the porticoes of the Roman churches; but when night closed in it was his happiest time, for then he would seek some unfrequented church, and there read the Holy Gospels, or Lives of the Saints, or, falling on his knees, become so rapt in thoughts of spiritual things,

that he would remain hour after hour, unconscious how time was passing, begging always to be taught to follow Jesus in poverty, contempt, and suffering. The sight of a crucifix made him weep so much, that when one was before him, he found it almost impossible to attend to the lectures in the schools; and the lessons God taught him at the foot of the Cross forced him, after three years' study, to sell his books, and devote the money to the poor, giving his life entirely to the pursuit of heavenly things.

Though Philip remained in the same house, he was scarcely ever to be found there now, the quiet churches were his true home in the day, and often he spent the night in one of them. If the churches were closed, he would kneel before the door, waiting for the moment when it would be opened and he could go into the presence of his Lord.

He also lived in the constant practice of severe penances, scourging himself with chains, sleeping on the bare ground, and keeping

strict silence, and yet in all this he longed for some stricter life, some deeper solitude.

At last he remembered the catacombs; there he should be quite alone, so amidst the bones of the martyrs he prayed and wept, and was so carried away by the fervour of his love, that often for three days he would stay underground, without having tasted food or water. After a time spent in solitude, the same love of God which had sent him there, filled him with a burning desire to save souls, and so to preach Jesus crucified, he returned once more to the crowded churches, to the streets, to the shops, to the hospitals—wherever sinners were, there was Philip Neri to be found. Strongly as he attracted all people by his sweet manner, he seemed to have the greatest power over youths, whom he persuaded first to listen to him, and then to turn to the service of God. Notwithstanding his fervour, Philip had temptations, but he resisted them all in dependence upon the Holy Spirit of God; many times the devil, in hu-

man shape, was allowed to appear to him, but prayer kept him safe and unharmed.

Eleven years after the Saint had given up all for God, he was praying with great earnestness for the gift of the Holy Ghost, when suddenly a globe of fire appeared to him, which entered his lips, and passed into his breast. It seemed, then, that he could not bear the heat within him, so he lay upon the ground and tore his dress open, and when, after a time, the intensity of heat grew less, he rose, feeling within his soul a strange new joy. But as he placed his hand over his heart, he felt that it was swollen, and during the rest of his life it remained so, although he was free from pain, and after his death two of his ribs were found to be broken, and raised up so as to form an opening between the ends. He also had a violent palpitation of the heart when he said Mass, gave Holy Communion and absolution, or prayed, and then it would shake the bed on which he lay, or even the altar where he was offering the Holy Sacrifice. Thus Philip's

prayer had been heard by his receiving the Holy Ghost in a sensible form, and with the gift his love to God increased so much that he could scarcely contain it within him. To us, who are so cold, so hard, in God's holy presence, it may seem strange to hear S. Philip cry, "My God, I cannot bear so much! Stop, Lord, or I shall die!" After this miraculous gift, Philip made no change in his outward life; still he taught the poor, visited the hospitals, and passed his nights in prayer, and it was not until the year 1551 that he took holy orders, and was ordained a priest. After then, he resided with his confessor and three other priests, joining together in prayer, and trying to vie with each other in gaining souls. Philip now began his sacred and happy duty of saying Mass, during which the tears rolled down his cheeks, and he became so overcome that he had to stop short, until he had power to continue the celebration.

Once, during his Mass, some nuns saw him raised from the ground, and a little girl also

saw this, and told her mother that "the father stood up in the air;" many such favours were shown him, and he obtained countless graces for others, by gaining them the recovery of health, or a complete conversion from sin, or some help in temporal difficulties.

At that time the Holy Sacraments were very much neglected, and S. Philip roused people from this indifference, so that they began to be frequent at confession and Communion, and as time passed on they came to him in such numbers, that he was hours in his confessional, where he once had waited almost in vain.

Though Philip's holy life did good to so many, there were others who took a very great dislike to him, and would have rejoiced to rid Rome of his presence; they laughed at his devotion, they would close the door in his face when he went to prepare for Mass, they would even drive him from one altar to another with violent words of abuse. But

the holy man was never disturbed by this treatment; not only was he silent and patient, but he even spoke well of those who persecuted him, and the more their spite increased, so did his prayers increase for them. Many of these persons became penitent, and were afterwards his most devoted followers. Philip was now sure that the place for him to fill was in the world, the life of an apostle amongst men; and though there were many longings for solitude, and for the joy of being a martyr for his faith, he took up the work God offered him, and for the last forty years he spent on earth, devoted his time and strength to toil amongst the sinful, the suffering, and those who needed a guide to a more perfect following of Christ.

The little meetings S. Philip had from the first held in his own room, to attract young men to converse about spiritual things, became so thronged that he was obliged to build an oratory over one of the naves of the church, and here were commenced the devotions and

exercises which resulted in the foundation, afterwards, of the "Oratory," where, in time, a religious community sprung up, who imitated the humility, and adopted the habits of life, of their much-beloved father. Many years passed before it took its place amongst the congregations and orders of the Church, but some twenty years previous to the death of Philip, he saw his great work accomplished, and his foundation supported by the protection of the Pope.

The Saint was growing old, but his life appeared to be continued that he might show forth the power and goodness of God, for strange favours were showered upon him. At the touch of his hand, pain would disappear, at his prayer life was often granted miraculously, temptations and sins were revealed to him before they had been confessed; and these things were of daily occurrence. Once a boy had died with a sin untold, which he had forgotten; at S. Philip's call, he awoke as if from sleep, made his confession, and then ex-

pired once more. Yet amidst all these marvels, the Saint's humility was ever increasing. "Not I, but Christ Who liveth in me," was the expression of the gentle face, the loving heart; and to try to excite the derision and contempt of others he would even do things which were in themselves absurd, but which, being done with the intention of glorifying God, were very dear to Him. At last, Philip became so old and feeble, that every one wondered how his life was continued, but he still attended the confessional, and was early and punctual in offering his daily Mass. He had the privilege of celebrating in private, because of his great age, and it often happened that his soul became so wonderfully united to God, that two hours would pass between the *Agnus Dei* and the conclusion, during which the server would leave the Oratory, so that no one might be present but Philip and the Lord he loved so fervently. When it was over, his eyes were full of heavenly light, and his pure soul seemed to

shine through his white face. At last the fathers of the Oratory hear that S. Philip is dying; they stand round his bed, when he is suddenly raised in the air, as he exclaims, "Oh, my dearest Mother, art thou come to free me from pain?" then recovering himself, he grew conscious that others were present, and, bursting into tears, wept long. The Blessed Virgin had indeed restored him for a time to his usual health and labours, but in the next year, 1595, he had an attack of fever, from which he never recovered, although his illness was lingering, and on the 25th of May, he died, having reached the age of eighty years.

As the fathers knelt around his bed, one of them cried out, "Father, are you going without speaking to us? At least give us your blessing." Then Philip opened his eyes, looked first to heaven, then to his children, and drew his last breath without any struggle, as if he were only falling asleep. Every one believed him to be a saint, yet many years passed

before his canonization was solemnized in S. Peter's church, and then the name so loved and honoured in Rome, became known and loved throughout the Catholic world.

S. Philip valued prayer so highly that he used to say that men who did not pray were like animals without reason ; prayer was life to him, and he sought to make it the life of others, bidding them thrōw themselves into the arms of God, asking Him to teach them how to speak to Him. Many short words of prayer were constantly on his lips, all breathing his spirit of humility, simplicity, and love ; one of these will give us the motive of his every action, " My Jesus, what can I do to please Thee ?" God's pleasure—not his own ; God's work, God's Will, God in everything, and self in nothing, made the life of Philip Neri holy, and his death all joy and peace.





S. Charles Borromeo.

THE life of S. Charles appears to be made known to us to show, that although solitude and poverty have been necessary for the sanctification of many holy men and women, it is still possible in the very midst of the honours and riches of this world, to keep a heart quite free from attachment to these things ; a heart which is humble, simple, and fixed upon God only. This great Saint was born upon the 2nd of October, 1538, about fourteen miles from Milan, and he began so early to show such pleasure in prayer, in building little chapels and attending to the altar, that his parents believed God designed him for the priesthood.

Charles, even as a very little boy, wished this most earnestly himself, and the desire caused him to be very careful that in his dress and his conduct there should not be the slightest thing unbecoming in one who hoped to consecrate himself to the special service of God.

During the time of his studies at the University of Pavia, his piety was an example to all his companions, and by prayer and watchfulness he obtained God's grace to resist all the temptations which beset him during his boyhood: When he was but twelve years of age, one of his uncles gave up to S. Charles a rich Benedictine abbey, and from another relative a second abbey and priory became his own property a few years later; yet he did not expend any more money upon himself, but increased his alms to the poor.

Before he was twenty-three years of age the Saint was made Cardinal, and then Archbishop of Milan, but in these and other dignities which came to him, he only thought of the

work he could do for God and the Church, remaining as humble and free from human considerations as if he had been poor and unknown.

So little did he trust his own judgment that he always had several persons about him whose advice he could ask in all that he undertook, and to these he listened with great submission. A life like his was full of occupation, yet, though he got through so much business, he never seemed to be in a hurry, and by giving up needless amusements and being very punctual and orderly, he found time for all that was necessary for him to do, and yet had many hours given to his sacred studies and prayers. S. Charles was very severe in his treatment of himself, but he had great discretion in his practice of penance, so that, instead of loading himself with austerities to which he was unused, he began moderately, increasing his fasts and mortifications every week, so that he was able to continue them to the end of his life.

He aimed at making himself indifferent as to his food, so that he eat black bread or white, and drank either clean or dirty water, just such as he met with where he might happen to be, and for many years before his death he fasted upon bread and water every day excepting on Sundays and holidays, and then he took some herbs or apples, but never any meat, fish, wine, or eggs. Whilst he was studying at Pavia, S. Charles was often in ill-health, but his moderation in his food quite cured him, so that it became a proverb to call strict abstinence "The remedy of Cardinal Borromeo."

He was in the habit of sleeping on a rough bed without removing his clothes, or else sitting up in his chair, until, at the request of the bishops of his province, he gave up doing so, and used a bed of straw, with a sack filled with straw for a pillow and only two coarse sheets and a counterpane to cover him. Though he had so much property at his command, S. Charles never expended any of it for his own use, excepting sufficient to buy a little

straw for his bed or bread and water for his food. Once a bishop found him studying during a severe night in a tattered, thin black habit, and begged him to put on something which would better protect him from the cold. S. Charles smilingly answered, "Suppose I have nothing better? The robes I wear during the day belong to the dignity of Cardinal, but this garment is mine, and I will not have any other for summer or winter." In his palace at Milan there were some beautiful sculptures and paintings, which he had all removed, and also the arms of his family, which had been placed there by some one else; he laid aside the name of Borromeo and used instead his title of S. Praxedes, and in place of his coat of arms he took the motto, "Humilitas." The very least flattery gave him great pain, and to avoid it he carefully concealed even the graces God gave him, and never spoke of himself unless it was to tell something which he considered a fault. Perhaps there is nothing harder than to be willing

to bear reproof, but to S. Charles this was not difficult; he was glad to be reminded of any failing, and had two very holy priests in his household who were specially commissioned to tell him everything they could see amiss in his actions. There was one priest who delighted to find fault with him, and for this reason S. Charles kept him in his family, and at his death left him a pension as long as he should live.

Although the Saint never spent any time in his own amusement, his kindness of heart made him ready to join others in anything which was not unsuited to his character as God's priest. One Sunday afternoon he had joined several others in a game of billiards, when one of the company asked what each would do supposing an angel came and told him he had only an hour more to live. "I should go to confession," said one. "And I should finish saying Office," said another, and so each in turn said how he should employ the time if he had been told to be ready to appear before

God; but when it came to S. Charles he exclaimed, "Well, I should go on with the game, for I began it for the love of God, and I do not know anything He would rather have me do at this minute, or I should not continue it." It is a lesson to us, that the very least action, even an innocent amusement which does not put aside any duty, may be begun and ended for God's glory if our intention is simply to please Him.

S. Charles was so desirous to be free from all imperfections that he went daily to confession before saying his Mass, and he had a wonderful light to see the least failing of which he could accuse himself, and for which his sorrow was deep and abiding. Once, in giving the Holy Communion, through the fault of the server, S. Charles let the Sacred Host fall, and his compunction was so great that as a penance he fasted for eight days, and was four days without saying Mass, which was the only time he ever omitted offering up the Holy Sacrifice unless in some serious illness.

The Saint had naturally a very great timidity in preaching, but believing that it was a way of attracting many souls to God, he set himself to conquer his reluctance, and became entirely the master of these feelings, so that God gave him great power over the hearts of those who heard him. He was also very anxious that children should be taught Christian Doctrine, and for this purpose established a great many schools, where he collected a number of teachers and scholars on Sundays and holidays, so that the Catechism should be well known and understood everywhere.

The great work of S. Charles was to arouse the priesthood to a more perfect life of humility and self-sacrifice; it cost him great trouble to visit all the churches and monasteries under his authority, but he persevered through all discouragements and difficulties, and succeeded in getting the services of the Church performed with more solemnity and devotion, putting right a great many things which had grown disorderly for want of thought and care.

Into the valleys far away from Milan and yet belonging to it, he went through snow and torrents, crossing rugged rocks which were almost impassable, bearing hunger and thirst, cold and weariness, joyfully, because he was about the work of his Master. If he saw a priest incapable of fulfilling his duties, he placed there another more zealous; in every parish he found out each person's state of soul, and their bodily wants were not forgotten; many who had gone astray through heresy were brought back to the Church, and he sent before him priests to prepare the people to receive the Holy Eucharist, which he gave himself.

The false accusations and persecutions which are the portion of every follower of Jesus Christ, came upon S. Charles Borromeo, but he only prayed earnestly for those who made themselves his enemies, and begged God to keep all anger and resentment from entering his heart.

The dislike to the saintly archbishop was

so bitter in those who did not love the cause of God's truth that three persons conspired together to murder him, and one evening, whilst S. Charles with his household were engaged in the usual devotions, one of these posted himself at the chapel door, and at a convenient opportunity, fired. The music ceased, and every one arose in great alarm, but S. Charles, without stirring, made a sign for all to kneel down again, and finished his prayer as quietly as if no interruption had taken place. This allowed the murderer time to escape; but the Saint believed himself to have received a deadly wound, and, lifting his hands, made an offering of his life to God; however, on rising, he found that the ball with which the blunderbuss had been loaded, had only struck his rochet and fallen at his feet, and some small shot had pierced his cassock. After retiring to his room, a slight bruise and swelling were found on the place which had been struck, which never disappeared during the rest of his life. The danger to which he had been ex-

posed made many desire to find out the persons who had been concerned in the plot, but S. Charles forbade this, and gave himself only to thoughts of God's goodness, making a solemn thanksgiving in public, and then offering his life anew to the divine service in the solitude of a retreat of several days.

The rochet worn by the Saint that evening is still preserved, as well as the ball which struck him. Afterwards, suspicions arose as to the murderers, and they were examined, upon which they confessed their guilt. S. Charles tried hard to get their lives spared, but all save one were executed, and he took care of their relations afterwards. However, these dangers and troubles proved how deep was the love with which the Saint was regarded by his people, and the reverence which the whole Church felt for him.

S. Charles had succeeded in putting down the many disorders of the Carnival, but with all his energy, he could not hinder many profane exhibitions and amusements, for which he

foretold that God would send the plague as a punishment. His words were true, for it soon broke out, and during the Saint's absence, news was brought to him of this calamity which had overtaken Milan. He hastened to the town, though the governor and nobility had left it in terror; he visited the place to which the infected persons were removed, and increased his prayers and penances to obtain God's mercy. In three processions the Saint walked bare-foot, dressed in violet, with a halter round his neck and a crucifix in his hands, offering himself to bear the punishment which his people had brought upon themselves. He also melted down all his plate, and gave his furniture for the relief of those who were destitute, and by his example, induced a number of priests to risk their lives in attending on the sick. After raging for some months, this terrible disease began to abate, and S. Charles fixed a day for a public thanksgiving, and three days' prayer for the souls of those who had died from it.

In the year 1584, the Saint seemed to have a strong belief that his death was not far off, and during his yearly retreat, he was more than ever absorbed in God, more than ever free from all attachment to earth, ready to live or die according to the divine Will. During the last week of October, he was taken ill with ague, but concealed it as far as he could, and only slightly shortened the times of his prayer, and allowed his usual dry bread to be toasted; no other care would he give to his body, but continued his work, going to Arona to finish the foundation of a college, and journeying on towards Milan. He reached there on All Souls' day upon a litter, and then the physicians were sent for, who said his illness was dangerous. He received the last Sacraments with great peace and happiness, and died calmly in the night between the 3rd and 4th of November, murmuring "*Ecce venio*" as he drew his last breath.

The forty-six years of his life had been years of labour for the good of souls, but there

was no weariness in his work, because it was all for God ; difficulties came often, but to his brave and generous heart they were but part of the cross of Christ, and false accusation became sweet, for it has been the portion of his Master, which he rejoiced to share.

And though S. Charles has long since been in the company of the blessed in heaven, he has left a remembrance of his name in the congregation which it was one of his works to form. He called them "Oblates," that they might never forget that they had offered themselves as an oblation to God ; he desired from them detachment from the world, although in that world they must work for souls ; he asked of them a devotion which would keep them ready to undertake any labour for God's glory that their bishop might command ; and, doubtless, many of his prayers were offered that souls might be led by their means to aim at the spirit of charity, humility, and contempt of the world which he taught and preached, as he journeyed about and round Milan, in the

earnest words which sprang from the earnestness of his heart, and by the still more beautiful teaching of a saintly life and example.





S. Vincent de Paul.

IN the humble little farm-house of a village in the south of France, Vincent de Paul was born, in the year 1576. They were six children in all, and, like the rest, Vincent had to look after the sheep, carry grain to the mill, and help his parents in many ways. But as he grew older, he showed such signs of talent that his father, with some difficulty, placed him at school in Acqs, where he made such progress that he was afterwards engaged as tutor to the little sons of a gentleman there, whilst he still continued many of his own studies.

Vincent went next to Toulouse, where he had seven years, and was then ordained

a priest, but where he said his first Mass is not known ; all that he tells is, that he was obliged to do so in a private chapel, because the sense of his own unworthiness overwhelmed him with timidity. After this he was appointed to a parish, but as another claimed the place Vincent gave it up, and went to live near Toulouse, where he received several pupils, who grew very warmly attached to him. Business took him from here to Bordeaux, and on his return by sea he was captured by some African pirates, and taken as a prisoner to Tunis, where he was exposed for sale. A fisherman bought Vincent, and sold him again to a chemist, who treated him very kindly, and tried to persuade him to turn to the same occupation, promising to bequeath him his money. But the Saint only desired to regain his liberty, and every day implored the intercession of the Blessed Virgin, in whom he placed his trust, that he should be delivered.

However, at the death of his owner, Vincent was again sold to a man who had three wives,

and one of these would go and watch him digging in the fields, and ask him questions about the Christian's God. At last she wanted him to sing, and when he began the *Salve Regina*, she listened with great delight. It came out that the husband had been a Christian, but turned from his faith, and, impressed by what she heard from Vincent, this Turkish wife reproached him for giving up such a beautiful religion, and her words took such an effect upon him that he escaped with his slave to France, where he was reconciled to the Church, while Vincent made his way to Rome. From Rome he travelled to Paris; where he was received at the royal palace for a time, and then sought lodgings in another quarter of the city.

Whilst staying there, a magistrate accused Vincent of robbing him of a large sum of money, and drove him from the room which they shared, declaring him publicly to be a rogue and thief; he even carried his complaint to the superior of the Oratorians, whom Vin-

cent was visiting, and there accused him of this robbery. In spite of all this, the Saint was calm and quiet, never seeking to excuse himself, but simply replying, "God knows the truth."

He teaches us in this a beautiful lesson of patience under false accusations, and though he was content to be suspected of this wrong, God brought his innocence to light some years later, and then the magistrate begged most humbly to receive his pardon.

About this time Vincent, by the advice of his director, gave up the many high offices which were open to him, to be a priest in the parish of Clichy. Here he laboured unwearyingly amongst his people—never in a hurry, never too busy to have a kind word for those who needed it, and yet his duties were constant. God gave him a wonderful power of understanding the different characters of those with whom he had to deal, so that he could win the timid by his gentleness, as well as repress the bold by his severe words.

For three years S. Vincent pursued this way

of life, and then, by the advice of his director, gave up his much-beloved work amongst the poor of Christ to be chaplain and tutor to a family of high position. But, staying there, he lived as much as possible in retirement, and under his beautiful influence the whole family became pious and devoted to good works.

But the heart of this holy man was drawn to labour amongst the poor, and whenever the family went to their country residence, he set about instructing and catechizing the ignorant, and hearing confessions, in which he had very great success. For a few months Vincent left his position of chaplain, and during that absence the first thought of founding the Order of Charity occurred to him.

A pious lady, named Louisa de Marillac, asked the Saint to direct her in charitable employments, and he found others who willingly joined her in the duties of visiting the sick and relieving the poor. This was the first beginning of the congregation of the Sisters of Charity, which has now spread to every part

of the Christian world, for the assistance of all who suffer, and the instruction of the ignorant.

The next work of kindness which S. Vincent attempted was amongst the galley slaves, having obtained the office of their chaplain from the king, Louis XIII. When he paid his first visit, he was shocked by the suffering in which he found them; and, what was still more terrible to him was the foul language which was heard amongst the prisoners. But he did not shrink from these wretched creatures. To him they were souls for whom Jesus had shed His precious Blood, souls whom He loved so dearly that it was worth the work of a lifetime to reclaim even one from sin. So, by sweet persuasive words he won hearts which had been hardened by punishment, and those who had cursed and blasphemed, learned to kneel humbly as earnest prayers came from the lips they revered. For some time Vincent visited these prisoners daily, instructing and preparing them for the Sacraments, and

when he was obliged to be absent he placed some of his friends in charge of them.

During this period the Saint once met with a man who was in a state of despair at the thought of the misery of his family during his separation from them, upon which Vincent went to the chief authority, offering to take this prisoner's place if he could be released. The offer was accepted, and for several weeks the good man wore the chains of the galley slave, until the affair was discovered by his absence.

Another of S. Vincent's great works was the foundation of a hospital for poor deserted infants, which he thought of through finding a little child left in the cold, snowy streets one night without a home, whom he picked up and carried to some charitable ladies, who assisted him in forming a place for such cases to be received.

The principal undertaking of the holy Vincent's life was not begun until he was forty-eight years of age—this was the congregation

of the Mission. It began with himself and two others, who went from village to village catechizing, preaching, and hearing confessions; and God blessed their work, so that other priests came to join them, and the prior of a house in Paris, called "S. Lazarus," resigned his possessions to the use of these humble missionaries. At first Vincent was frightened at the thought of being established at the priory. In his humility he deemed it far above him and his brethren, and it was more than a year before the offer was accepted and the congregation removed there. Immediately some disputes and opposition were aroused, but they soon came to an end, and Vincent remained in possession of the priory of S. Lazarus.

Meanwhile Louisa de Marillac, or "Madame Le Gras," was toiling on in works of mercy amongst the poor surrounding her, clothing the destitute, nursing the sick, gathering little ignorant children around her, assisted by a company of devout women, who busied themselves thus in different towns and villages.

Then S. Vincent formed a little community under her control, which became dear to all hearts from their self-denying love and untiring zeal. As time went on, they began to receive orphans under their charge, and attend hospitals and sick convicts. Twenty-eight of these houses were founded in Paris alone during the Saint's life, and the good work spread throughout France and even to Poland.

It would not be possible to describe all the wise and holy works of Vincent's commencement. His was a long life, all given to God and his fellow-creatures, and during its close he preached more powerfully by his patient sufferings than even by his fervent words. For some years he was not able to walk, but he afterwards lost the use of his limbs, so that he could no longer stand at the altar. What a sacrifice this was could be known only to God, but his consolation was to hear Mass and communicate daily. Those who went to see him found him always cheerful and uncomplaining, directing those works of charity

which he could no longer actively perform. Every morning after Mass, he would repeat the prayers of the Church for the dying, and thus he awaited the call of his Lord. On the 26th of September, 1660, he was able to hear Mass and receive Communion, but he had scarcely been carried back before he fell into a heavy sleep, from which he was roused by the visit of the doctor, who pronounced him dying.

Then the priests of the Mission gathered round and besought his blessing, and Vincent raised his hand, beginning the words of benediction, but his voice failed, and he sank back exhausted. That night he received Extreme Unction, and early in the morning of the 27th September he died in the chair from which he had not been removed for twenty-four hours, so peacefully that he only seemed asleep. For nearly eighty-five years he had lived in the world, bearing its trials, fulfilling its duties—now the time for rest and reward had come.

Many hearts grieved when they heard that the grave had closed over Vincent de Paul.

But his work did not die with him ; it lives still in his sons, who preach the faith of Christ amongst the heathen in far-off regions ; in his daughters, who serve Jesus in the persons of His poor ; and every Catholic heart blesses the honoured name of the simple, humble Saint who worked wonders through the love of souls which he had learned at the foot of the crucifix, and sinking deeply within his heart, kindled there the holy fire which made him the great apostle of charity to the world.





S. Jane Frances de Chantal.

ABOUT three hundred years ago, a little girl was born in the quaint old city of Dijon, whom the world knows and loves now as S. Jane Frances de Chantal.

The child grew up strong and healthy, but when she was about a year and a half old, her mother died, and she lost that loving care which no one else could quite supply. But Jane was well trained and taught, and had, from a very early age, a strong sense of right and truth. She was very much in her father's company, and, upon one occasion, was present whilst a visitor was saying that he did not believe in the Real Presence of Christ in the

Blessed Sacrament. Jane was then not quite five years old, but she could not hear such words in silence, and, going up to him, exclaimed, "But we *must* believe that Jesus is in the Blessed Sacrament for He said so Himself, and if you deny it you are making Him a liar." The visitor was surprised and rather amused at his little opponent, and after vainly trying to puzzle her by difficult questions, he brought out of his pocket a parcel of sweetmeats by way of turning her thoughts to something else. The little girl received them gravely, and put them in her pinafore, but she walked straight up to the fire, and, putting them in it, said, "Look—that is how heretics will burn in the flames of hell, because they do not believe what Jesus Christ has said."

Jane's favourite study was the Christian doctrine, but she also got on quickly with reading, writing, music, and needlework, and as he observed her industry and intelligence, her father gave her the best education which was possible in those times.

As her First Communion and confirmation drew near, Jane began to feel a great longing to find some way of giving herself to God's service—at times she wished she might be called to die as a martyr for the true faith, at other moments she thought of giving herself altogether to the care of the sick and dying, but always the desire was in her heart, although it was not immediately that it pleased God to show her the way in which she was to follow Him.

When Jane Frances (which was her name after confirmation) was about fifteen years old, her eldest sister married and went to live in Poitou, where the young girl visited her and became exposed to all the temptations of admiration, flattery, and vanity which exist in the world; still she seems to have suffered no harm, for, as a safeguard, she put herself specially under the protection of the Blessed Virgin, and redoubled her prayers. At last her father wrote to her, desiring her return home, and it was upon her arrival at Dijon

that she saw the Baron de Chantal, who was to be her husband.

She was married in 1592, and instead of giving herself up to pleasure, Jane spent the first months of her new life in great retirement, making her soul her chief care. When they had been married three months, the King of France summoned the Baron de Chantal to join him at Paris, so that Jane was entrusted with the management of their property and of the household in their castle at Bourbilly. Although she felt some shrinking from the responsibility, as soon as her husband was gone, the young baroness set about fulfilling her duties carefully and well. She began by restoring the habit of having daily Mass in the castle chapel, fixing an early hour, so as to allow the servants belonging to the house and the farm to be present. Then, when breakfast was over, Jane would take her spinning-wheel, or her knitting, and, sitting amongst her maids, try to teach them the truths of their religion, and turn their thoughts to God; every evening

she said night-prayers with them, and on Sundays and holidays went with them to hear Mass at the parish church. At that time it was the custom for all to join in singing during the Mass, and Madame de Chantal taught them during the week, taking particular pains with the "Credo." Thus the young baroness was the mainspring of her home, and she received her rich friends and neighbours kindly, and Bourbilly was spoken of everywhere as a model household. But it was amongst the poor that Jane Frances loved to be, and for them she had the sweetest smiles of welcome as they thronged the castle gates, and she would herself go down to the courtyard, helping to fill their basins with soup, cutting bread, assisting the most helpless, speaking pleasant words to each and all. If she heard of any one kept at home by sickness, she would order a basket to be packed, and ride off with it herself to the cottages, where she was a most welcome visitor.

Madame de Chantal lost her first-born chil-

dren almost immediately they came into the world, but one boy and three girls were spared to grow up, and over these she watched with the most loving care, offering them, at their birth, to God and the Blessed Virgin.

In the year 1601, there was a dearth of all kinds of food; numbers of the peasantry died from want, and those who were able to wander about in search of provisions might be seen eating weeds and nettles, or even the remains of birds and animals.

The Baron and Baroness de Chantal did all that was possible to lessen the misery around them. Every day bread and meat were distributed in the courtyard, and people for twenty miles round came to be fed at Bourbilly. Some of them went and devoured their portions secretly behind the walls, returning a second time, but when this was found out, Jane could not bear to have them punished, saying, "My God, I am a beggar every moment at the door of Thy mercy, and what should I say if I were driven away by Thee after the second or third time?"

Her husband allowed her to fit up part of the castle as an hospital for the sick, and particularly to receive those poor women who had little babies, to whose husbands she sent a pound of bread every day. But the servants of the castle began to complain loudly at all this generosity, declaring that their mistress would spend all her husband's money upon the poor; and when, at last, there was only one barrel of flour in the granary, they cried out more bitterly than ever against her charitable work.

The crowd was waiting at the castle gate when Madame de Chantal went to see with her own eyes the state of the provisions, but upon perceiving the solitary barrel, her heart filled with trust in God, and she bade the servants heap up other barrels with the flour, and give liberally to the famishing poor, and for six months the household and the beggars at the gate were fed from that one barrel, which was still full when the next harvest-time came round.

In the midst of this distress, the baron was taken ill, and his wife was so troubled that the fear of losing him was more than she could bear to think of. It was not God's Will that he should die from that illness, but after a short happy time of renewed health, he was killed by a terrible accident which happened when he was out shooting, from the discharge of the gun which his friend and companion was carrying. He was carried to the nearest cottage, and there a priest was soon by his side, and the baroness weeping over him in the most violent grief, but in spite of the care of his physicians, he died, after lingering for nine days, and Jane was left a widow with four little fatherless children to protect and guide. At first she refused to eat or sleep, spending hours together before the Blessed Sacrament, forgetting everything in her bitter grief, but after a time, God aroused her from the violence of her first sorrow by the thought of her duty to her little ones and in her home. Now, her first action was to lessen the number of her

servants, give her rich dresses for the use of the Church, and take that time which before had been rightly used for the entertainment of her husband and his friends, to be devoted to prayer, reading, visiting the poor, and the care of her children.

A great change took place in the soul of Jane de Chantal at this time—some interior voice seemed calling her to sacrifice, to a life more wholly given to God ; and yet she could not entirely understand what was His Will regarding her, so she set herself to pray that she might find some one to guide her according to the Divine Spirit. About this time, God showed her, by a strange and unusual favour, who this future guide would be ; for one day, as she was riding near a little woody copse, she saw, at some distance, a person who looked like a bishop, walking to meet her in his cassock, rochet, and biretta. His face, so calm and holy, brought a feeling of peace into her heart which she had never known before, while a thought came to her mind, sent by God,

"This is the guide in whose hands you will place your conscience." Jane rode quickly to the spot, but no one was there, and it was not until the Lent of 1604, that during her visit to her father at Dijon, she saw, in the celebrated preacher, Francis de Sales, the director of her vision, whom God had given in answer to her prayer.

Madame de Chantal's joy was very great, when, after her first interview with the holy bishop, she felt that every word he spoke came directly to her soul from God, and she begged him to guide her in the service of God, and teach her how to love and please Him perfectly.

From this time Jane made a rapid but steady progress in holy things, and S. Francis, whose quick eye soon discovered her failings, her impetuous nature and inclination to disregard the convenience of other people, quietly led her to re-model all that needed improvement.

Noticing the expression of grief upon her

face, which had never left it since her husband's death, Francis bade her "be joyful for God's sake," and Jane immediately forced herself to *look* cheerful, and she soon found that the habit came naturally after a little effort, and went from her face into her heart. She had also been particular about her eating, but under her wise guide she now tried to take anything which was before her, without choice at all, and so she mastered completely any whims or daintiness.

More time than ever was given now to the poor, and with her own hands Jane would wash and dress the sick, and carefully patch their clothing, and very often on her return home, after a long and weary round of visits, she would find a group waiting for her, many with terrible wounds to be attended to.

Once when the fever was raging round Bourbilly, Madame de Chantal was attacked by it, and her life was despaired of, but it occurred to her to make a vow to the Blessed Virgin, and immediately she got up and

dressed, and was soon able to resume her duties amongst the poor.

But Jane still longed for a higher life; much as she tried to do, it seemed to her nothing compared with God's demands upon her, and although she struggled to quench her longing by thoughts of her duty to her children, her efforts were useless, for the fire which the Holy Spirit had enkindled in her heart would not be put out. At last she opened her heart to S. Francis de Sales, but he only spoke to her of "patience;" nor could she win any other reply from him during a long time. But after about a year of waiting, Francis sent for her and told her that he had decided for her to enter upon the religious life, and he began to explain his plan for founding the order of the Visitation, which he felt sure was to be her future work. The only painful thing to be done was the parting from her father and her son, for Madame de Chantal had a heart which clung with intense love to her children. But when God calls, there can be no drawing

back in 'one who is wholly devoted to Him, and Jane was prepared for any sacrifice which should unite her more closely with Him.

It was on the evening of S. John's Day that, with a beating heart and trembling lips, Madame de Chantal sought her father's room, to tell him that the time had come when she must leave all for God. As she was going to turn the handle of the door, she knelt down, asking strength for the task which was before her, and then entered and began to speak about her children and of her desire to leave Monthelon. M. de Frémyot replied that the girls would be going to school, and that the eldest was already betrothed, whilst he should take entire charge of the boy. But when Jane told him that there must be other changes, that it was she herself who must leave to follow out her long-delayed desire to enter religion, he burst into tears and remonstrated with her for thinking of doing so.

From all sides objections came; she was accused of being unnatural and cruel to wish

to leave her old father and forsake her children, and it was only God's grace in her soul which kept her firm and faithful in the path He called her to follow.

When the time came for her to bid her relations farewell, Jane went round the large saloon in which they were assembled, saying something kind and affectionate to each, with her face calm, although her eyes were swimming in tears. Celse Bénigne, her boy, now fifteen years old, used every entreaty to persuade his mother not to leave them, and at last threw himself at full length before the door, so that she was forced to step over him to get to the carriage. Then the bitterness was over; it had been like the agony of death to the loving heart of the Saint, but God's strength had carried her through it without a wavering thought.

To follow Madame de Chantal through her religious life, would not be possible in a short history like this, but we must just glance at her now at Annecy amongst her novices,

living in the sweetness of retirement and prayer. They were very poor, so that often the sisters had not even a candle to light the house, and once there was only threehalfpence in the money-box, yet God always sent them help in their needs, and marvellously supported them.

And so the institute flourished, and the number increased under the care of their wise mother and the guidance of S. Francis of Sales, and new convents were founded in other parts as time went on. Then, in 1622, the holy bishop died, to the great sorrow of Mother de Chantal, who had been guided by him so long. But although she had now to carry on his great work alone, to try and sustain in her daughters his spirit of strength and sweetness, she was prepared to rise above her own grief and bend submissively to God's Will.

Towards the close of her life, Mother de Chantal left Annecy to visit her convents in different parts, and during her stay in Paris,

she was told by a Carmelite nun that her end was near. "O my God, what good news!" replied Jane, quickly, and during the rest of the day she referred joyfully to these words. From Paris she went to Melun, and as she journeyed, felt more and more ill, and by the time she reached Moulins she felt convinced that she would die.

On the morning of the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, she got up at five o'clock with the rest of the nuns, but was seized with the shivering of fever; however, they could not persuade her to lie down until she had received Holy Communion and the Mass was concluded.

Then she went to her bed, never again to leave it, for after a few days' suffering she died. At the last moment her confessor said to her :—

"The Bridegroom is coming—He is here—will you not go forth to meet Him?"

To which she replied :—

"Yes, father, I am going. Jesus! Jesus!"

Jesus!" and with that sweet Name upon her lips, which she had loved so well in life, her eyes closed, and her happy soul rested for ever in God.





S. Francis Xavier.

ONE of the best-known, best-loved names among the fellow-students and followers of Ignatius Loyola is Francis Xavier, whom Almighty God chose to renew in his own life many of the wonders and labours of the lives of the first apostles, and gave that attractive manner, that energy, and powerful mind which were necessary for him fully to carry out the divine purpose in his creation.

His pious parents had implanted in his little heart a great fear of offending God, and a remarkable modesty of manner which preserved his childish days from sin; and, as he grew older, his strong desire for learning caused him

to turn his whole mind to study rather than to follow the taste for military life which his brothers possessed. His progress in education was so rapid, that he was early sent to the University at Paris; and there he gained many honours, and at twenty-two years of age was teaching philosophy in the schools.

God was not then his great, his only end. The glory his talents had won, the flattery with which he was surrounded, had done their work, and his thoughts were full of the position he had already attained, and the still higher place he beheld awaiting him in the future. But God's way was not his. The time was coming when he would awake to see his true life-work, and just when he was enjoying the place he had gained by his abilities, S. Ignatius, who had left home, and friends, and fortune, came to France. The founder of the Company of Jesus soon heard of Francis Xavier, and believing that God had great purposes for him, Ignatius resolved to win him to use his gifts for a nobler and higher end than worldly approbation.

“What will it profit a man if he gain the whole world and suffer the loss of his own soul?” Over and over again Xavier heard those words from the lips of his new friend, but it was not easy to relinquish his ambitious desires, and become forgotten and despised, for the love of Christ. At length Francis declared his intention of thinking seriously about the affairs of his soul, and for this purpose gave himself up to the directions of Ignatius, and during the retreat which this great spiritual teacher gave him, the love of God penetrated the long-closed heart, and Francis Xavier came from his retirement a changed man, his only ambition to bear the cross and give his life for the glory of his Creator and the good of his fellow-men.

One of the seven who made their vows in the chapel of Montmartre, he accompanied Ignatius to Rome, and there had an audience from Pope Paul III., who encouraged him to go generously along the path which opened before him. The King of Portugal had made a

request that some of the fathers of the new society might be sent as missionaries to his possessions in the Indies, and although S. Ignatius could only spare two from his followers, one of these was Francis Xavier.

Their route to Lisbon took them within a short distance of the home of his parents, yet Francis refused the ambassador's permission to visit them, so that his soul might not be hindered by renewing ties which he had put from him for the service of God. This mission to the Indies was not entirely a surprise to Francis, for once, in a dream, he had seen the miserable darkness of those heathen souls, as if his own lot was cast among them, with great toils, and cares, and sufferings to undergo; therefore, when he was chosen for this mission, he felt that God had forewarned him of what was to come.

On his arrival at Lisbon Xavier was invited to make his stay at the court, but he would lodge nowhere save at the hospital, and lived on alms which he collected himself. However,

he won so much esteem and affection during his stay, that the king began to think of keeping him there, instead of allowing him to proceed to the Indies. Francis set sail from Lisbon at last upon the 7th April, 1541, which was his thirty-fifth birthday, on his voyage to Goa, in Hindostan. He carried with him letters from the Pope, giving him the power to teach and preach throughout the East, but he refused to take with him any attendants, although he was urged to do so. The voyage was one so much dreaded that passengers usually took a winding-sheet with them, in case of death, so that their bodies might be buried in the sea with some Christian decency. The ships were in those days only despatched once a year, and were then crowded with merchants, soldiers, and travellers of every kind. However, fortunately for Francis Xavier, the company he met with seemed unusually quiet and respectable.

Yet it was a strange life for one who had only before been with students like himself, or

in the company of Ignatius, and we could scarcely have felt surprised if Xavier had shut himself up in the solitude of his own cabin during the voyage. But it was during his time on ship-board that he really began his apostolic life, mixing freely with all, winning them gradually to give up their bad habits of swearing, and becoming a peace-maker in many quarrels. During the voyage, illness broke out, and there was no one to attend to the sick but Francis and his friends, who washed their linen, dressed their food, and fed them with the greatest care and gentleness. He soon persuaded many to go regularly to confession, and every Sunday he preached on the deck of the ship.

When they got as far as the island of Mozambique, S. Xavier was ill himself with fever, but during its height he would visit and instruct the others, hearing the confessions of the dying, and comforting them in their last hours with the sacraments of the Church. During this time news came to him one day of

the sudden death of a boy who, he was told, had never had any instruction, and Francis was filled with the keenest sorrow and self-reproach that even *one* soul which had been within his reach should have died in ignorance, although he knew that such an one was not responsible before God for what he did not know.

When Francis reached Goa, he found it full of vice and sin, but he was not cast down, and so vigorously did he work that in a few months' time there was a remarkable improvement visible. God gave him grace to see how to deal with different characters, how some could be won by great gentleness, and others by thoughts of hell, death, and judgment. Going about the streets, Francis would ask some one to give him a meal, and then, sitting down at the table, talk kindly and cheerfully to his host, call for the children, and, taking them in his arms, ask God to bless them. After a while great numbers of slaves and little children would run to him in the streets,

and follow, as he led the way, to our Blessed Lady's church, where he would sing the catechism to them, so that they might more easily remember it. In this way, all about the streets and houses of Goa, instead of bad or silly songs, the Christian faith was to be heard, even from children who could but just speak. Very often he would go up and down the town, tinkling a little bell in his hand to attract notice, crying out, "Faithful Christians, for the love which you bear to Christ, send your servants and children to hear the Christian doctrine."

Francis next made a journey to the Christians who had been newly converted, dwelling on the Fishery Coast, where he preached and taught, and administered the sacraments during the time he stayed there, to people who scarcely knew anything excepting that they *were* Christians, and who begged him to teach them some prayers. The greatest suffering was to find so many souls needing care which they could not have, and in one of his letters Francis said he wished he could visit all the Universities in

Europe, and get some of their learned men to come and work in those distant and neglected places to gain souls for Christ. But while his days were passed in labour, he gave the greater part of the night to prayer, begging God's blessing upon his work. In the villages he visited, the Saint spent much care in instructing the children, who then became his helpers, teaching the Creed and the Commandments to their parents, and getting such a hatred for idolatry, that when Francis heard of any sacrifice being offered to their false gods, he would go to the place with a band of children, who fell upon the idol with sticks, and heaped every abuse and outrage on it.

Very often S. Francis would persuade a whole village to come out and burn the temple and idol to the ground. In the accounts which he gave, by letter, to S. Ignatius and other fathers of the society, Xavier avowed that he obtained more conversions by means of the "Hail Mary" than in any other way. But his own sweetness of disposition, his

energy, his holiness, and lastly, the many miracles which God was pleased to work by his means, kept the people faithful to the truth they had received. In Goa he established the College of S. Paul, for training students to missionary work ; then he went to labour in Travancore with the same success which always attended him. While there, a young man was one day being carried to the grave, followed by his father and mother, and a numerous crowd, when S. Xavier met them, and the sorrowful parents asked him to restore their son to life. Their grief touched his heart, and he came and stood near the corpse, lifting up his eyes to heaven in prayer. Then, sprinkling the body with holy water, he took the young man's hand and raised him up in perfect life and health, and the people were so impressed by what had happened, that many immediately became Christians, and a large cross was set up to which many resorted who desired to see the ground where God's power had thus been shown.

From province to province, throughout Hindostan, this great missionary journeyed almost entirely on foot, his days a continual succession of prayer, labour, and miracle, for by the mere touch of his hand, or his blessing, many sick were immediately healed; so in the Molucca islands, in Ceylon, everywhere his foot rested, he gained triumphs for Christ.

Large books have been written describing the life and labours of this wonderful Apostle of the Indies, which yet have not contained accounts of all that he did, and in a short story of his work for God, it is not possible to speak of all the wonders which were joined to his teaching, but we must follow him as he goes to Japan.

While Francis was visiting Malacca, a native of Japan came there, on board a Portuguese ship, called Paul Auger. He had lived a bad life, and having, in a quarrel, killed another man, had fled from punishment and got on board this vessel. Francis met him, and induced him to go to the missionary college at

Goa, where he afterwards saw him again, and when the Saint started on his new undertaking, Paul Auger (now a Christian) was one of those who went with him, and, when they landed, found out his own family, who provided the missionaries with a lodging.

Here, in Japan, as in other places, S. Xavier received power to perform many miracles. One of the natives came to tell him of his daughter's death, and after a few minutes' prayer, the holy Francis bade him return to his home, where he would find her living. The man was both angry and unbelieving, but when his servants came running to tell him the strange news, he returned to see what had happened, and, bringing his daughter back to Francis, was baptized with her and the rest of his family.

After staying more than two years in Japan, the Saint returned to Hindostan to visit his converts, and inspect the college which he had commenced at Goa, but, on the voyage, many dangers surrounded the ship which carried him.

During one terrible storm, after hearing the confessions of the passengers, and leading them to submission to the holy Will of God, he went to a corner and became absorbed in prayer, where another of his companions found him immovable, before a crucifix. When three days had passed, he suddenly rose up, took a rope and flung a portion of his robe into the sea with it, calling on God to have pity upon all on board the vessel, and immediately there was a calm.

Having, at last, reached Malacca safely, S. Francis longed to go on a mission to China, and, in spite of many difficulties, he got as far as the island of Sancian. It seemed that God would treat His servant as He had, long before, treated His servant Moses, for though from this island Francis could see the land of his desire, it was made known to him that God accepted his intentions, but that the work in the great Chinese empire should be done by the hands of his brothers, not himself.

Francis had not been long upon the island

before he was seized with fever, from which he recovered after a fortnight's confinement. Then many sorrows and disappointments happened to him, for those who had promised to help in his design of going on to China failed him for want of courage. But very soon Francis was again struck with fever, and he felt sure that his death was approaching.

There was a scarcity of provisions on the island, and during his illness the Saint suffered real want, lying in a poor hut which scarcely sheltered him from the cold wind and rain, but with his crucifix in his hand all the time. When he was delirious, his talk was always of his mission to China, or murmuring short prayers in Latin, such as "Jesus, Fili David, miserere mei." So his illness went on, and for the last two days he could take nothing; then, on a Friday, the 2nd December, about two o'clock in the afternoon, he fixed his eyes with a fond gaze upon a crucifix, and murmuring, "In te Domine speravi, non confundar in

æternum," breathed his last with a heavenly joy gleaming upon his face in death.

When the body of Francis was placed on board the vessel, which was to carry it back to Malacca, it was found to be perfectly fresh and unchanged, and then those Portuguese who had been cold and neglectful to him in his illness, crowded round the coffin, weeping and lamenting his loss.

The plague had been raging in that part of Hindostan, but after the ship came into the harbour, and the sacred body was carried through the streets, it was immediately stayed, and many wonderful cures took place.

The remains of this great apostle were taken to Goa, where they rest even to this time, amongst the people to whom he carried the light of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

We shall never find a life of more continuous sacrifice than that of S. Francis Xavier; we shall never find a death more worthy of such a life, in suffering and desolation amidst unfriendly hearts, upon the island of Sansian.

But with the support of God's love all around him, and an infinite confidence which filled his heart, there came faintly from his lips with his last breath, "In te Domini speravi."





S. Teresa.

THE people of the fine old Spanish city of Avila had long been noted for their piety and goodness, and because of the courtesy and grace of their manners it had the name of "the city of knights;" but in after-years, when it was known and loved as the birthplace of S. Teresa, it had the better, nobler title of "the city of saints."

It was in the year 1515—just when Martin Luther began to teach his wicked doctrines and injure so many souls—that God sent the little child into the world who was to do so much for Him, and win others to His service. Teresa had a sweet face and very graceful manners; she was playful and merry, too, yet

older persons liked to talk to her because she was also very sensible and full of thought about God and holy things. From quite a young child she loved to be alone, and her greatest happiness was to read or hear about the lives of the saints, which gave her so intense a desire to be very holy, that at seven years old she used to pray that God would let her die, so that she might live with Him at once.

Teresa had many brothers and sisters, but amongst them was one more dear than the rest, and that was Roderick, who was nearest her own age. These two children used to read together about the saints, and when they saw what some of them had endured for the love of Christ, it seemed to their little hearts as if they also would gladly be martyrs; so that they might enter heaven very soon. So often they talked about this, that at last they began to try and arrange some way of suffering, and they settled to go into the land of the Moors, where they would probably be beheaded,

asking alms as they journeyed for the love of God. At length one day they escaped from their father's house, with a few little pieces of bread for provisions, resolving to cross over to Africa, and they walked so rapidly that they really got beyond the city gates before their flight was known. Their mother, in great distress, sent in all directions in search of the missing children, who were fortunately met and taken home by an uncle who lived in that place. They were very much scolded for what they had done, especially Roderick, as he was the eldest, and he began to blame his sister, saying it had been her doing, for she persuaded him to run away.

Teresa did not try to excuse herself. "I ran away," she said, "because I cannot see God until I die, and I want to die that I may go to Him."

The little girl shed many tears at the loss of the martyr's crown she longed for, but she consoled herself with thinking that instead of a martyr she would be a hermit; so Roderick

helped her to build small hermitages in the garden, where they meant to live like the Fathers of the Desert, of whom they had heard ; but unfortunately they were not well made and quickly tumbled into ruins.

Teresa had good and holy parents, yet she was so young that they never thought of teaching her more than the prayers and devotions used commonly by children ; but God had begun to lead her to a love of that way of meditating in prayer which made her so holy in after-life. She had a picture in her room of Jesus talking at the well with the woman of Samaria, and Teresa would sit for hours gazing at it, thinking over it until she longed so much for the "living water" promised to that poor woman, that she would say over and over again, "Lord, give me this water." At other times she would go alone to say the rosary, which she always loved very much, and which she had been taught to use very early.

Her favourite amusement when she was

with other children was to make convents and pretend to be nuns; yet, although she liked to play at being a nun, it had not nearly such a charm for her as the thought of a martyr or hermit. But although her earliest years were filled with these holy, happy thoughts, Teresa, at nine years old, was beginning to get farther away from God. She loved reading, but the histories of saints pleased her less now than before, and it is sad to think that she began to amuse herself with exciting, foolish tales of fancy, which did her soul great harm. Thoughts about her appearance and her dress came creeping into the little heart which had once been only full of the desire to suffer and die for Jesus, and thus her love of prayer was not so strong. In all this Teresa did not mean to offend God; the desire to please Him, though not as great, was still there; it was this craving after new and exciting books which was hurting her so much, and she spent hours of every day in poring over them.

At twelve years of age Teresa had her first

great sorrow, in the death of her good mother; but it shows us how much piety was still in her heart, when, at the news being told her, she ran sobbing to the feet of an image of Mary, begging of her to fill the place of the mother she had just lost. No one ever has, nor ever will, make such a prayer in vain, and the Blessed Virgin must, indeed, have watched tenderly over the motherless girl, or she would never have grown up so holy. Yet even then Teresa was not weary of the vanity and foolishness which had gained a place in her heart, and it was some time before she yielded herself to the sweet voice of the Holy Spirit, which had been calling her from her infancy to live wholly for God.

She had begun to make companions and form friendships which could only cause her to become giddy and worldly, when fortunately an elder sister saw her danger and persuaded their father to place Teresa under the care of some nuns of S. Augustine.

At first, the stillness of the convent made

her miserable, but, afterwards, she began to love the house, and liked also to talk to the sisters, asking them to pray to God for her. Very soon her conscience was aroused to see the faults she had been committing and the danger which had surrounded her soul, and her heart was full of gratitude to God for bringing her out of temptation to the safety of the quiet convent; all her love for prayer returned, once more she began again her spiritual reading and the long-neglected rosary, and sought grace, by receiving frequently the holy Sacraments.

However, Teresa had not yet any desire to become a nun—it seemed, in her eyes, a hard and cheerless life; still she begged that the religious would pray God to show her in what way He wished her to serve Him. A severe illness befell her next, in the year 1533, so that she was obliged to go home to her father's house until she partly recovered, after which she visited an uncle, whose piety made a great impression on her mind, and thence she went

to spend a time with her elder sister, Doña Maria, whom she loved very much. After her return home, Teresa had a knowledge that God was calling her to give herself entirely to Him in religion, and, at the same time, the devil tempted her in every way possible to hold back from this grace. Resolving to obey the good inspiration, Teresa asked her father's leave to enter a Carmelite convent, but all that he could be persuaded to say was, that after his death she might do as she pleased. The convent on which she had fixed her choice was just outside the city of Avila, and it was strange that an unknown person had visited the place, and said, as he gazed at the walls, "A saint, of the name of Teresa, will come and dwell in this house;" when told of it, she laughed, exclaiming to a nun of the same name, "I wonder which of us two it will be."

When once she was sure of the Will of God, Teresa was afraid to remain in the world lest her resolution should fail her, so she arranged to leave her father's house without delay. We

may be sure that she must have prayed very earnestly to God to guide her before she formed this plan, and begged the nuns of the convent to prepare to admit her.

One of Teresa's brothers was about to consecrate himself also to God, and, under his care, she left home very early in the morning of the day before the festival of All Saints, when she was about two and twenty years of age. The sorrow it caused her to go from her father like this was very great, but the love of God was stronger than the love of home, and she had no sooner reached the convent than the suffering ended, and peace came into her heart. Now that he was sure God called her to religion, Teresa's father gave his full consent to her receiving the Carmelite habit, and her new life was most sweet and peaceful to her. No matter how lowly the office given her, she did it with gladness, even if it was but to fold up the nun's cloaks, or light them to their cells, or to attend upon most painful cases of sickness. But God sends trials to all whom He

loves most, and Teresa came first in the way of all kinds of pains and sufferings of body and of mind, and then followed a long course of little jealousies and persecutions from some of the other sisters, which was so hard to bear, because she had always been loved and admired at home amongst her friends.

Teresa often felt as if she could not live in the midst of coldness and contempt, but God gave her grace to see that He sent her these troubles to bring her nearer to Him, and so she learned first to bear them *patiently*, and at last, *gladly*, for His sake, knowing it to be so much better to suffer there with her Lord than to have all the joys and love of the world without Him.

As soon as she had made her vows as a nun, Teresa became dangerously ill, and, for some days, lay apparently dead. She would certainly have been buried alive, if her father had not refused to allow it, and then, at the end of the fourth day, she awoke from this strange sort of sleep, and gazed with surprise at the friends

who were weeping and praying round her. In that time, God had revealed many secret things to her, and she told her confessor that she had seen what heaven and hell were like.

Although restored to life, Teresa suffered very much for three more years, and then she suddenly grew stronger through the intercession of her chosen patron, S. Joseph. The next few years saw the Saint grow rapidly in holiness and in the love of prayer, and the more she knew of God the more humble she grew, deploring every fault with bitter tears. Many wonderful visions were sent to her, many temptations beset her, many judged her harshly and untruly, but nothing turned her aside in her way to heaven ; neither happiness nor sorrow, praise nor blame, took one thought away from God.

In a miraculous vision which occurred to her, it seemed as if a bright angel pierced her heart several times with a golden dart, which caused her to be filled with an unspeakable love to

God; it gave her great pain and yet made her very happy, because, ever after, she seemed burning with devotion to her Lord. After her death, the wound was seen in her heart, which appeared to have been burnt. From the time she received this great favour from God, Teresa had still stronger proofs of His love, and He made known to her the special work she was to do for Him in rousing the religious in the different Carmelite monasteries and convents to a stricter way of life. From place to place she journeyed, drawing many souls to love God who had before forgotten Him, leading others, who had begun to serve Him, to be more courageous in their sufferings, and more fervent in their devotion.

It was often said of her that "Teresa could do everything," but it was by the Holy Spirit dwelling within her that she succeeded in her difficult duties. Those priests who took care of her soul for many years, say, that she was never once guilty of a mortal sin, that every day of her life she grew more and more like

her Master, Jesus Christ, and that no suffering or persecution ever lessened the strength of the love with which she offered even the smallest actions of the day to God.

Although she had suffered so much weakness and pain of body, Teresa lived to the age of sixty-eight. Eight years before she died, God revealed to her the exact date upon which her soul would be called away, and she put a mark to it in her Breviary. As the time began to draw near, she visited most of her convents, taking a tender leave of the nuns there, and urging them to live in the presence of God, seeking to grow continually in virtue and holiness. Teresa wished to die at Avila, so, as her weakness increased, she began her journey there, but she was stopped on the way by the desire of the Duchess of Alva to see her and receive her advice in some great trial, and she was then too exhausted to move again.

The religious in the convent of Alva, where she died, had seen strange bright lights before she arrived in the cell which she was taken to,

and they judged from this that the time of her death was come. Three days before she expired, the Saint sent for a confessor, to strengthen and prepare her for the end, and then she lay peacefully, her face shining with such a heavenly beauty that those near her could scarcely gaze at its brightness. She was constantly praying with the greatest humility that God would pardon her sins, and the words which seemed oftenest on her lips were those from the psalm, "Miserere," "*Cor contritum et humiliatum Deus non despicies.*" At the moment of her death, the religious heard sounds as if many persons were entering the cell and coming round her bed, and it is believed that these heavenly visitors were martyrs who, in one of her visions, had promised to take her pure soul to heaven. Lying in death, the face of Teresa looked as fresh and beautiful as it had been in her childhood, whilst a sweet fragrance came from her body which filled the whole convent, and after her burial many miracles were worked at her tomb.

Thus ended the life of the little child who had once longed to die as a martyr for Jesus Christ. God willed, instead, that she should work long years for Him in the world, that her courage should strengthen those who were weaker, that her prayers and labours should bring such a glory and blessing upon the order of Mount Carmel. And if we want to know how she won her Saint's crown in heaven, we need but look at the words she once wrote in her Breviary, which show us that all her hope and trust were in God, all her heart was given to Him.

“Let nothing disturb thee,
Let nothing affright thee,
All passeth away,
God only will stay,
Patience wins all.
Who hath God needeth nothing :
For God is his all.”

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